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Roger Federer tames Roddick anew in US Open

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2 retired CA justices ask SC to stop Senate probe of Garci starting today

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PMA '06 valedictorian Lt. Ariel Toledo dies of liver cancer; 27

Metrobank
For a fresh perspective in banking leadership.
Pages A11

Big businessmen want closure in Erap case

By Raissa N. Dominguez

THE PHILIPPINES' MOST INFLUENTIAL business leaders yesterday said they would accept whatever the Sandiganbayan would decide on Joseph Estrada's P4-billion plunder case, with some saying they would support an amnesty or pardon in the event of a guilty verdict.

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Friday, September 7, 2007 | 64 | 12 sections | Vol. 31 / No. 271 | P18 | www.inquirer.net

Pinoys remember him best for what he didn't sing

HAILED BY MANY AS THE GREATEST TENOR of his generation, Luciano Pavarotti sang at the Philippine International Convention Center on March 21, 1994. His idol will linger, however, a bare remembrance by filipino music lovers for what the italian tenor didn't sing.

Running a fever and a runny nose, Pavarotti could only shake his head when

THRILLS IN MANILA. Opera's global superstar was presented by Impresario Buenaventor "Bebot" Arroyo to a sold-out concert at the PICC on March 21, 1994. Then Vice President Joseph Estrada was the highest-ranking official in the audience and rose to his feet to honor the tenor after his last song.

Pavarotti, 'most beautiful tenor voice of our time,' is dead at 71

HE SET OPERA ISA LLABOUT...

ROME—LUCIANO PAVAROTTI, whose effusive high C's and rich-hued showmanship made him the most beloved and celebrated tenor since Caruso and one of the few opera singers to win crossover fame as a popular superstar, died Thursday. He was 71.

His manager, Terri Robson, said that Pavarotti died at his home in Modena, Italy, at 5 a.m. (0300 GMT). Pavarotti had been diagnosed with pancreatic cancer last year and underwent further treatment in August.

"He maintain fought a long, tough battle against pancreatic cancer which eventually took his life. In living with the approach that characterized his life and work, he remained positive until finally succumbing to the last stages of his illness," Robson said in a statement.

In serious fans, the cultured tonsity and thrilling virginity of Pavarotti's voice made him the ideal interpreter of the Italian lyric repertory, especially in the 1960s and '70s when he first achieved stardom.

He millions more fan chairman a performance of standard arias like "Nessun Dorma" from Puccini's "Turandot" came to represent what

PAVAROTTI, A3

Palace calls key players

Mendoza, Neri meet with Ermita on ZTE deal

By Michael Lim Ubac, Tony S. Bergonia and Norman Bordadora

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY Eduardo Ermita yesterday summoned to a closed-door meeting the alleged main players in the national broadband network (NBN) project, Communication Secretary Leandro Mendoza and former Planning Secretary Romulo Neri.

The $329-million NBN contract won by ZTE (Chi), has been seen by public opinion over allegations of massive bribery and undue advantage given to the Chinese firm.

Earlier in the day, Ermita said he would ask Neri to explain the circumstances surrounding the deal.

"I will talk to him. He's in the

PALACE, A6

SHANTYTOWN DREAMING The view from the downtown along the banks of the Tullahan River in Pasig City is richly rewarding for its aspirational residents. Sleek condos rising up like a dream world in the misty distance of Fairwood, Libis, Quezon City.

GMA has a lot on her plate today in Sydney

By Julie Lelog-Jaworski

SYDNEY—PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-Arroyo arrived here last night a little more than a day before the end of other leaders of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (Apec) forum summit on Sunday.

Philippine Consul General Maria Theresa Lazaro said there were no official honors for Ms Arroyo at the Sydney International airport at 9:54 p.m. because of the "informal" tradition of the Australian government.

The President was accompanied on the chartered Philippine Airlines flight by her husband Jose Miguel Arroyo and a high-powered business delegation.

Ms Arroyo has a full agenda today, before the one-day Apec leaders meeting which begins on Saturday.

First on her schedule will be breakfast hosted by US President George W. Bush for her and other leaders of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations at 11 a.m. today. Bush will then have a 20-minute meeting with Ms Arroyo.

She will also meet with Australian and Australian businessmen and leaders of the Global Filipino Networking Conference tonight.

Before the Bush-Arroyo talks, Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo will meet with US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice.

Lazaro said Rice and Romulo are expected to discuss the fight against terrorism, continuing US military aid to the

GMA HAS A 10

CA orders AFP: Yield report in Jonas case

By Lelia B. Salamero

SAYING THE LIFE AND LIBERTY of missing activist Jonas Burgos take precedence, the Court of Appeals directed the present secretary to produce in court on a plate number under military custody that was later seen on the redesk of Jonas' abductors.

The appellate court denied a motion to quash the subpoena for the report, saying the secretary

CA ORDERS, A6

MMDA's 'Gwapotel' big hit at ₱20 a night, ₱5 a bath, with transients

By DJ Yap

SINCE OPENING FOUR MONTHS ago, "Gwapotel Inn" run by the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority has apparently delivered on its no-frills offer: basic, decent lodgings for out-of-towners on a tight budget.

And according to MMDA Chair Bayani Fernando, even white-collar types and tourists have been checking in, taking advantage of the rock-bottom ₱20 for a night's stay, a mere ₱5 for a bath.

More than 40,000 transients have had a generally pleasant stay in the low-story "hotel" on Boniface Drive, Port Area, Manila, since its opening on May 14, Fernando reported in a statement yesterday.

The 714-bed inn, which used to house the offices of National Power Corp, but is now painted in "BPO" signature pink and blue, has since posted an average occupancy rate of 73 percent, or about 518 guests daily, the agency said.

But unlike its regular hotels, the overnighters don't get room service from a resident dogging area, three double-deck beds

MMDA'S, A14

Palace forms new media office to polish RP int'l image

By Michael Lim Ubac and Christian V. Esguerra

MISSION TO POLISH THE Philippines' image in the global arena.

President Macapagal-Arroyo has formed a separate media office "to monitor overseas media coverage and, thereafter, coordinate with

PALACE, A10

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WEATHER FORECAST

SC asked to stop 'Garci' probe

2 ex-Court of Appeals justices file for TRO on eve of Senate hearing

By Leila B. Salaverria, Gil C. Cabacungan Jr. and Christine Avendaño

SAYING THE ISSUE WOULD FURTHER DIVIDE the country, two retired appellate court justices yesterday asked the Supreme Court to stop the Senate's reopening of the "Hello Garci" controversy to probe President Macapagal-Arroyo's alleged involvement in electoral fraud as purportedly shown by wiretapped phone conversations.

Retired Court of Appeals Justices Santiago Ranada and Conrado Agcaoili also told the high court the Senate's planned investigation, scheduled to open today, would be in violation of the Anti-Wiretapping Law or Republic Act No. 4200, as well as the constitutional rights of those appearing before it.

They said that since the rules of procedure for the conduct of inquiries in aid of legislation had not yet been published, "any person who may testify in the investigation is deprived of his rights."

Ranada and Agcaoili filed the petition for a temporary restraining order on the Senate investigation, and for an eventual permanent injunction against it, as concerned citizens, taxpayers and members of the Integrated Bar of the Philippines.

"Petitioners are of the firm conviction [that] any attempt to use the so-called Garci tape will further divide the country," they said in their petition.

Unless a TRO or preliminary injunction is issued, the defense Senate investigation's inquiry/hearings will escalate into a continuing violation, if not a flagrant disregard or defiance, of the Constitution, including the serious infringement of the constitutional rights of those involved, affected or invited as resource speakers, as well as a violation of RA 4200," they said.

According to the retired justices, the Anti-Wiretapping Law prohibits wiretapping as well as the mere possession and use of wiretapped materials. They said even the discussion of the contents or existence of illegally recorded conversations was not allowed.

"The Constitution merely provides that an illegal wiretap shall be inadmissible for any purpose in any proceeding," they said.

The use of evidence obtained in violation of a person's right to privacy is also banned under the Constitution, the former justices said.

"There is an even order unforbidding the wiretapping of the purported conversation nor is there a law allowing such on the ground of public safety and order," they said.

Bishop Socrates Villegas, retired Gen. Hilario Aliu, a former Armed Forces chief of staff, and former Army Sgt. Vidal Doble will testify the opening today of the Senate's Hello Garci probe which will focus on the extent of the military's wiretapping operation, the public officials who ordered the "tagging," and obstruction charges.

The three could reveal their testimonies through interviews, said Sen. Rodolfo Biazon, chair of the committee on national defense which will lead the joint Senate panel probe into the wiretapped conversations between the President and former election official Virgilio Garcillano.

Biazon said the defense committee was not interested in listening to the tapes, which would remove fears of possible violation of the Anti-Wiretapping Law.

"All we need to do is to establish that there is a tape and find out who were responsible for those tapes or we can establish what the body was doing at the time," said Biazon.

Not all heroes' deaths are on battlefield, young officer shows

By Tarra Quismundo

IN THE FACE OF DEATH, THE warrior within shone through.

He was a fight different from his "comrades" in the battlefield, but Air Force Lt. Israel Tabelisma died a hero just the same in a hospital bed Wednesday night, succumbing to the liver cancer he had fought so valiantly against for more than a year.

Tabelisma, valedictorian of Philippine Military Academy Class '2006 (Mandirigmang Bangal ng Lahi) or Mandirilat had dreamed of pursuing studies abroad and becoming a pilot.

Instead, he became the fifth casualty among the 324-strong Mandirilat Class, which lost Marine Lieutenants Eugene Mackinar Pilotea, Bobbie Ganotisi and Ernin Solomon in battle in Basilan on Aug. 18 and Aug. 31, Mark Ewy Oncebia in a commando relief attack in a remote Abra town in May.

"Within four months we lost five classmates. So it's very tragic for our class, a big loss," said Xiel Jo Bautista, another, among Tabelisma's dearest mindoro [classmates].

"He didn't give up. Until the end, it was just his body that was giving in but mentally he was really fighting. He was one of the strongest among our classmates," Bautista said.

Tabelisa's older brother, Marlon, rallied himself to talk about his brother's only soldier.

"He had many dreams. He wanted to help us all. But he fell sick... He was fighting until the end but it was for nothing," said Marlon, among the soldier's nine surviving siblings [two had died earlier].

Marlon said that since their parents died years ago, the siblings saw their brightest hope.

Their policeman father, Pirades, 62, along with brother Prudencio Jr., were killed in a single shooting in their native Ilocos Sur in 1992. Mother Nita died from a health condition in 2001, another older brother died in a child.

Tabelis was accorded military honors yesterday at Villamor Air Base, his hearse greeted by the somber sound of trumpets and a line of young officers and enlisted men standing at attention and saluting their fallen comrade.

His white casket was draped in the Philippine flag in the Philippine Air Force mortuary where his remains would lie for three days before being brought to rest in his hometown Sto. Domingo, Ilocos Sur, on Saturday.

He had expressed the wish to be buried there to his girlfriend of seven years, Margaret Joanne Asuncion.

"He told me what he wanted... he said he should be buried in Ilocos... It was like we didn't want [to part ways] yet, he didn't want to go yet, but I guess he was already finding it hard to fight... I'm just not sure," said Dissertation, fighting back the tears.

"Because whenever I asked him, he said he still could go on. And then, I don't know, maybe it was just not possible anymore," she said.

Dissertation resigned from her job as a financial analyst in a beverage company to take care of Tabelis.

"When he was still strong, when he was still as like PMA, we talked about our what ifs, like what if something happened to him. He told me he didn't want people crying over him and he didn't want us to wear black. He wanted us to wear white, it's the most sacred, he said," she said with a slight smile.

The couple would have wed in January 2008.

It's September, so why does it feel like May?

IT'S SUPPOSED TO BE COOL AROUND this time of year, why does it feel like summer all over again?

For the rattling host that lorded Metro Manila, the rest of Luzon and the Visayas the past few days is nothing seasonal, weather forecasters said yesterday.

"Blame it on the high pressure area," Nathaniel Cruz, head of the Philippine Atmospheric Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration's weather branch, said in a phone interview.

A high-pressure system brings bright, sunny days with isolated rain showers and thunderstorms in the evening.

"We actually call it fair weather," Papers weather observer Mildrie Aurelio explained that around this time of the year, when the earth is tilted 23.5 degrees, the sun's heat is concentrated on the southern hemisphere, where the Philippines is located.

The highest temperature of 35.5°C in Luzon on Monday, 36°C on Tuesday and 39°C on Wednesday were all recorded by the Papers station in Casiguran, Aurora.

In Quezon City, the temperature rose from 33.2°C on Monday to 33.9°C on Tuesday before dipping even slightly to 33.8°C on Wednesday. The highest temperature recorded so far in Metro Manila was 37°C in Quezon City on April 24. — INQUIRER

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Palace calls key players; Neri to be asked about bribe offer

Front page A1

papers today," the executive secretary said.

Ermita, however, pointed out that Neri "neither confirmed nor denied the bribery attempt."

Neri neither confirmed nor denied on Wednesday that he was offered P200 million to support the NBN project, which seeks to establish a seamless interconnectivity of land-line, cellular and Internet services among all government agencies and offices.

Neri, now head of the Commission on Higher Education, said he would talk when properly summoned by Congress. The House and the Senate are set to investigate the deal.

Rep. Carlos Padilla, in a press briefing, said Neri, former director general of the National Economic and Development Authority (Nedal), had been offered up to P200 million to support the deal.

Asked about the bribe money offered to Neri, Ermita said: "I have yet to verify it, but I will talk to him."

Ermita had to preside over the meeting with Mendoza and Neri because President Macapagal-Arroyo left yesterday for Singapore to attend the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit.

As of press time, Ermita, Mendoza and Neri were still in the meeting in Malacañang.

The NBN project was approved by the Investment Coordination Committee of the Cabinet, which is headed by Ms Arroyo, on May 30, 2006.

But Neri said Ms Arroyo did not push ZTE to implement the NBN project because the Neda board only approved the "policy" of setting up the broadband project. Neri said it was the DOTC that chose ZTE.

No engineering design

The Philippine government struck a deal with ZTE to build a broadband backbone without a detailed design of the project, the supply contract thus Philippine officials entered into with ZTE showed.

The absence of the engineering design rebuts the claims that signed indorsers that the project's technical specifications were subject to under-the-table deals, a UP economics professor yesterday said.

Big stink

A copy of the contract, obtained by the Inquirer, showed that there was no detailed engineering design yet for the NBN project at the time Mendoza and ZTE vice president Fu Yong signed the supply contract on April 21, in the presence of Ms Arroyo in Hainan, China.

Raul Fabella, economics professor at the University of the Philippines who conducted a paper on the NBN, expressed surprise upon learning that there was no engineering design at the time of the contract signing.

"In this case, the speed [specifications] could be moved around, depending on unclear terms," said Fabella, who wrote the UP paper on NBN with Emmanuel de Dios, dean of the UP School of Economics.

"This has become a very big stink," he said in a phone interview. "It's amazing."

Under the contract's binding Scope of Work, Article 16.2 said: "The contractor (ZTE) shall prepare and complete the detailed engineering services, the plans, specifications and design and submit the same for the approval of the purchaser [government]."

"As specified in the attachments in this contract, the contractor shall: a) prepare and complete the detailed engineering studies, plans, specifications, and designs for the project and submit the same for approval by the purchasers," the contract said.

It wasn't clear how the project proponents were able to come up with $329 million as the cost of the NBN project without a detailed engineering design.

Provision to determine cost

But in the absence of a detailed engineering design, the contract has a provision that would determine costs based on designs that had yet to be submitted at the time of the signing.

"The Final Bill of Quantities shall be revised in accordance with the actual requirements of the project to be determined and approved by the purchaser and the contractor during the detailed engineering stage," said Article 5 of the supply contract.

Critics of the deal called for an investigation of allegations that Commission on Elections Chair Benjamin Abalos had brokered the deal and offered bribes to people whose support was needed to push the project.

Abalos repeatedly denied the accusations, but admitted that he had met with officials of ZTE for golf here and in China.

Abalos now faces impeachment proceedings in the House of Representatives.

Impeachment rules

The House on Wednesday night adopted provisional rules that will govern impeachment proceedings and congressional inquiries in aid of legislation.

House Majority Leader Arthur Defensor said the chamber adopted the rules because of the threatened filing of an impeachment complaint against Abalos.

A former congressman, Bello Sico Bolot Bagilat, has said that he had enough evidence to nail Abalos in an impeachment case.

Sagales said he would file the impeachment complaint against Abalos next week.

A businessman, who talked on condition of anonymity, said Abalos had brokered the deal and collected $130 million to three businessmen Jose de Venecia III, cofounder of ABS, to back out of the broadband project.

Lack of clarity

The UP paper written by Fabella and De Dios pointed to lack of clarity as the major source of confusion in the debate over whether or not the country needed the NBN.

"The debate ... has become confused largely because the government has failed to specify a) its minimum technological requirements and b) its minimum assumptions if the project were to be implemented via BOT [build-operate-transfer]," said the UP paper.

"As a result, government officials are able to lob off one proposal against another by merely doing one or the other technical detail," it said.

A list of questions attached to the April 21 supply contract failed to indicate the existence of an engineering design at the time of the contract signing.

Intellectual property rights

Assistant Secretary Lorenzo Tañada of the DOTC said one of the key figures pushing for the deal, said in an interview before the Inquirer obtained a copy of the contract that one of the key concerns of ZTE officials is not being open with details, particularly technical ones, was intellectual property rights.

The UP paper, however, said that it was still debating for the government to succeed into a project without the specifics of what it wanted.

"Since it [government] did not set its own minimum conditions beforehand, however, the government effectively allowed bidders and loan-grabbers to write their own terms regarding what should and should not be included in the NBN project, what technology should be used, and so on," said the UP paper.

Like 'fruits in general'

"This situation is as absurd as calling for a bid to supply government with 'fruits in general,'" it said.

"This gives great leeway for dis-

CA orders AFP ...

Front page A1

that could happen with its disclosure was the demoralization of the Philippine armed forces and embarrassment to the administration if the abduction would be known.

"This court is not ready to order the speaking of the subpoenas merely because it would cause embarrassment to these AFP officers or personnel who made it possible for the abductors to possess or utilize the subject plate number in the abduction of Jonas Burgos," the court said in a resolution on Sept. 5.

"Jonas Burgos' liberty, or maybe even his life, which is at stake in the present petition for habeas corpus, takes precedent importance over these reasons being raised by respondents."

Col. Joshua Abadilla, the 4ID provost marshal general, and Assistant Solicitor General Amparo Tang informed the court during the hearing of the habeas corpus petition on Monday that they would file a motion for reconsideration.

Tang said that even if the motion for reconsideration was denied, she would not consider it a setback since the Old not think there was anything adverse in the ruling.

The family of Burgos, 56, said the late publisher and press freedom icon Jun "Joe" Burgos, has been trying to get a copy of the report which was subpoenaed during an earlier hearing of the petition for habeas corpus that Burgos' relatives had filed.

Abadilla has told the court that the report is not under his control and that it is irrelevant to the petition because it only dealt with the administrative liability of officers involved in the loss of the license plate.

Fishing for evidence

Abadilla also said Edita Burgos was fishing for evidence and that the subpoena was unreasonable or oppressive because it would subject him to contempt—and not too far behind, opportunities for corruption—on the part of those authorized to issue licenses, he said.

Despite the absence of an engineering design at the time of the signing, the contract was able to fix the costs of the project components.

For equipment, the contract said $194 million was to be allocated out of the $329 million. About $118 million would be for engineering services.

At least $14 million would be for "managed services," while $14.9 million would be for training.

While down were an engineering specifications at the time of the signing, the contract was clear on the terms of payment.

Cost of equipment

For equipment, the contract said 15 percent of $329 million shall be paid in advance by the government upon the signing of the contract's implementation starts.

The government, under the contract, shall pay half the cost of equipment delivered within 30 days after the papers for the delivery had been submitted, as the project is carried out.

The government, said the contract, shall also pay in advance 15 percent of the cost of engineering services 10 days after the start of the contract's implementation.

The same terms apply to the payment of managed services.

Corrections

IN THE SEPT. 3 ISSUE, a story on Page A3—"9 senators vs 'Garci' probe-Miriz"—misquoted Sen. Juan Miguel Zubiri as saying that Senate Majority Leader Francis Pangilinan cited among the senators "who had been insistent about violating the civil rights of Ms Arroyo." Zubiri was referring to Senator Ethereldy Louder Aquilino Pimentel Jr.—not Pangilinan.

* * *

IN THE SEPT. 3 ISSUE, a story on Page A11 had an erroneous headline—"Survey a vindication for Erap, says Arroyo." It was Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile, Joseph Victor "JV" Ejercito—not Sen. Panfilo Lacson who hosted the dinner for the barrage of a recent Social Weather Stations survey vindicated ousted President Joseph Estrada.

* * *

IN LATER COPIES OF THE SEPT. 6 ISSUE, a photo caption on Page A6 misstated the concurrent position of Solicitor General Agnes Devanadera. Devanadera was recently designated acting justice secretary....not "acting DOTC [Department of Transportation and Communications] chief."

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RP chosen site of first Asean arts and crafts exposition

THE PHILIPPINES HAS BEEN chosen as the venue for the first international expo to showcase the arts and crafts of shoppers and artists from the 10 Asean nations and their partner countries, it was announced by Tourism Secretary Joseph Ace Durano.

The First International Arts and Crafts Expo of the Asean Handicraft Promotion and Development Association (AHPDA) will be held on Nov. 22-25 at the SMX Convention and Exhibition Center, SM Central Business Park, SM Mall of Asia in Pasay City.

Durano said the expo has the support of the government and the private sector.

"The Asean expo will provide a platform to raise the level of awareness on the importance of arts and crafts in marketing tourism," Durano said. "The event will have three major components—exhibits, a business forum and cultural events."

Durano is chair of the expo's national organizing committee. Cochairs are Trade Secretary Peter Favila and Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo. Philippine Tourism Authority General Manager Robert Barbers is vice chair while the DMX Corporation is to implement.

Task force

In his talk with the expo, Durano has created a task force headed by Dr. Mina T. Gobot, AHPDA president and former tourism secretary, to monitor the construction preparations, arts and crafts markets, crafts demonstrations and workshops, cultural shows, national day celebrations and furnishings.

Filipino tourism attaches will coordinate the participation of their host countries in the marketing meeting called to Manila by Durano.

To be displayed in the pavilions are Asean indigenous arts and crafts, including decorative items, jewelry, fashion wear and accessories, textiles and fabrics, household products, artistic ceramics and gift items.

The expo is scheduled to at Legaspi Towers 300, Roxas Boulevard corner F. Ocampo Street, Manila, with tel. nos. 525-9328 to 27. More information can be had at www.ahpda-expo.com or by e-mailing ahpdaexpo2007@yahoo.com or person@dotpinet.gov.ph.

It ain't over, but '07 already a banner year for tourism

By Jerome Aning

WITH FOUR MONTHS STILL TO go, the Department of Tourism is already hailing 2007 as a "milestone year" for Philippine tourism as it eyes a record-breaking 3 million foreign visitors.

"This will be a milestone year for the tourism industry," said Secretary Joseph "Ace" Durano in a statement, citing first semester figures showing more than 1.5 million foreign tourist arrivals.

"With the upbeat and sustained momentum of visitor influx, we're looking at breaching, for the first time, the three million mark by yearend," Durano said.

Top dollar-earner

The DOT's latest figures showed arrivals in the first half of the year registering 7.6-percent growth over the same period last year—"a figure that surpasses the optimistic forecast," the secretary said.

The DOT sees tourist spending rising to as high as $3.9 billion, or P210 billion, this year.

Durano said visitor expenditure growth averaged 20.11 percent over the last three years, making tourism one of the top dollar-earners for the country.

In 2006 alone, he said, the travel and tourism industry generated an estimated 3.49 million jobs, representing 10 percent or one of the top employment generators in the country.

But aside from increased visitor arrivals, revenues and jobs, Durano said more than $2 billion in investments had been poured into tourism estates, hotel and resort developments in emerging destinations like Mactan-Cebu and Iloilo-Guimaras.

Other destinations

Aside from the two provinces, the DOT, in cooperation with their local governments, is promoting other destinations like South Cotabato, Pampanga, Camarines Sur and Batanes Island for both investors and tourists to consider.

Durano said an individual luxury resort was developing a 40-star hotel on Elephant Island in Bicolandscape—which showed the global business community had revived its interest in the Philippines.

Shilton have also opened new resorts such in South Korea-Davao, Boracay-Kalibo, Taipei-Cebu, Shanghai-Cebu and others.

Work in India and Russia emerging as fast-growing tourist sources, the DOT is currently negotiating for new routes in these countries.

Together with the Department of Foreign Affairs, it has finalized visa upon arrival arrangements. Interisland connectivity has also improved with increased flights over the past year.

Strong demand

"It is still very much a supplier's market for the industry as resorts and hotels are overbooked with the strong demand for rooms. It is a good challenge to have and we need to ensure that infrastructure development properties and tourisms the natural resources to these areas," Durano said.

To highlight the country's multiple attractions, Durano recently ordered the revival of the slogan "7,107 islands" on DOT's promotional materials.

"Our country is a multi-destination, offering a wide variety of activities and attractions anywhere from historical walks to water sports. This effectively reflects our vision, a total experience we aggressively and proudly promote to our target markets," Durano told reporters.

Bullet still proves to be lucky charm for Filipino arrested, freed in Brunei

By Cynthia D. Balana

A FILIPINO WORKER HAS BEEN FREED OF a court in Brunei after charges of possession of ammunition against her were dropped on "compassionate grounds," the Department of Foreign Affairs said yesterday.

Florida Nanuarie Norman was set free on Sept. 1 after the public prosecutor's office informed the magistrate court that it did not wish to pursue the case against her, according to a report by Philippine Ambassador to Brunei Virginia Benavidez.

The public prosecutor said Norman "did not pose a threat to the security of Brunei Darussalam following a background check."

Norman, a garment worker based in Malaysia, was reunited with her Australian husband, Peter, and their 1-year-old son, John Stanley, after 10 days' detention at Jerudong Prison.

Norman was traveling with her family to the Philippines from Darwin, Australia, via Brunei Darussalam when she was arrested at Brunei International Airport on Aug. 21 after a bullet was found in her shoulder during screening check. The Normans were about to board a connecting flight to Manila at the time.

During police investigation, Norman explained that her father had given her the bullet as an amulet during her university days. It is the Philippines, she has since kept the bullet as a lucky charm.

The DFA said the case against Norman was dismissed through the collective efforts of the Philippine Embassy, the office of Brunei's Attorney General and the Royal Brunei Police Force.

According to the ambassador, Norman was the third Filipino national to be charged with possession of ammunition. In August and October 2006, two Filipino seafarers aboard a Taiwanese fishing vessel were charged with the same offense after bullets were found in their possession. All three Filipinos said the live bullets were amulets and lucky charms.

The embassy has appealed to Filipinos traveling to or transiting in Brunei not to carry live ammunition.

"Such amulets or lucky charms could turn out to be magnets for sinful undertakings during the trip. Brunei's Arms and Explosives Act is very stringent and punishes the unauthorized possession of ammunition with imprisonment of five to 15 years," Benavidez said.

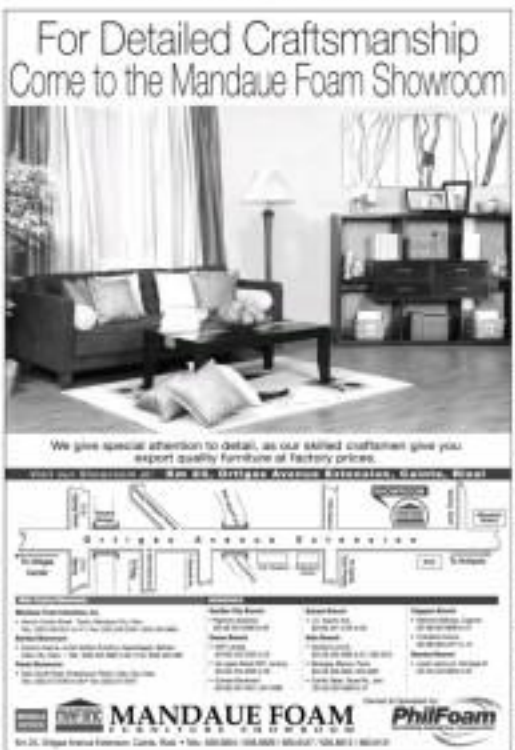
Aside from imprisonment, those found with live bullets could also be punished with "whipping with of not less than 5 strokes and not more than 15 strokes."

A pregnant Filipina worker, meanwhile, who was a victim of illegal recruitment, has been repatriated from Turkey.

In his report to the DFA, Ambassador to Turkey Baltazario Quizumbo said the victim, whom he did not identify, left Istanbul en route to Manila on Sept. 3 with the assistance of the embassy.

Quizumbo said the victim was the months pregnant and did not want to deliver her baby in Turkey. She claimed her boyfriend abandoned her and he could no longer be located.

Quizumbo said the 22-year-old OFW, who grew up in Catabato City, was recruited in November 2006 by a friend in Metro Manila who facilitated her birth claim to make it appear she was 23 years old.



OK needed to hire Pinoys directly

By Jerome Aning

FOREIGN EMPLOYERS WHO WANT TO hire Filipino workers without using the services of local recruitment agencies must obtain approval from the Department of Labor and Employment, the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration governing board has ruled.

In a board resolution, the POEA board expanded a ruling banning outsourcing the recruitment of land-based overseas workers, which allows the registration with the POEA of "name hires" as an exemption from the ban on direct hiring.

"Name hires" refers to workers who obtain employment on their own without the participation of recruitment agencies.

Registration with the POEA gives overseas workers such benefits as insurance and health care, education and training, family welfare services as well as protection and assistance in their place of work.

The Labor Code prohibits an employer from hiring Filipino workers by overseas employers, except through the boards (the POEA) or entities authorized by the secretary of labor.

As an exemption, however, the POEA was allowed to process the employment contracts of overseas Filipino workers who are directly hired by members of the diplomatic corps and officials of international organizations.

Foreign employers who are accredited with private recruitment agencies are not allowed to directly hire Filipino workers, explained POEA administrator Rosalinda Dimapilis-Baldoz.

The new measure will cover directly hired OFWs' deployment.

Baldoz said the POEA will soon be issuing guidelines for the implementation of the resolution.

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Pavarotti, 'most beautiful tenor voice of our time,' is dead at 71

From page A1

opera is all about.

In fact, "Nessun Dorma" was Pavarotti's last performance, singing at the opening ceremony of the Winter Olympics in Turin, Italy, in February 2006. His last full-scale concert was in Taipei in December 2005.

It was the second monumental loss to the opera world in as many months. American soprano Beverly Sills, whose widespread popularity outstripped Pavarotti's, died on July 2 at her home in New York. She was 78 and also suffered from cancer.

Intangible magic

Pavarotti was instantly recognizable with his diamond-black beard and muscle-bursting girth. He radiated an intangible magic that helped him win hearts in a way Placido Domingo and Jose Carreras—his partners in the "Three Tenors" concerts—never quite could.

"I always admired the God-given glory of his voice—that unmistakable spread timbre from the bottom rap to the very top of the tenor range," Domingo said in a statement from Los Angeles.

"I also loved his wonderful sense of humor and on several occasions of our concerts with Jose Carreras...the so-called Three Tenors concerts—we had trouble remembering who are never giving a concert before a paying audience, because we had so much fun between ourselves," he said.

Pavarotti, who retained equality at ease singing with soprano Joan Sutherland or with Andrea Bocelli, died on July 5 at her home in New York. She was 78 and also suffered from cancer.

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Biggest superstar

"The word commercial is certainly what we want," he said, after appearing in the world's publicized "Three Tenors" concerts. "We've reached 1.5 billion people with opera. If you want to use the word commercial, or something more denigrating, we don't care. Use whatever you want."

"Pavarotti is the biggest superstar of all," the late New York Times music critic Harold Schonberg once said.

In his heyday, he was known as the "King of the High C's" for the ease with which he found off-the-flesh top notes. In fact, it was his ability to hit nine glorious high C's in quick succession that first turned him into an international superstar, singing Tonio's aria "Ah! Mes amis" in Donizetti's "La Fille du Regiment" at New York's Metropolitan Opera in 1972.

Pavarotti turned in a film called "Yes, Giorgio" 20 years later, assisted his biggest but a Hollywood career and appeared in a filmed version of "Tosca." He wrote an autobiography, "I, Luciano Pavarotti," and made more than 90 recordings.

From Beijing to Buenos Aires, people immediately recognized his incandescent smile and bantering bulk. Clutching a white handkerchief, he sang arias and Neapolitan folk songs, pop numbers and Christmas carols for hundreds of thousands in outdoor concerts.

Controversies

His name seemed to show up as much in gossip columns as culture-vulture reviews, particularly after he split with Adua Veroni, his wife of 33 years and mother of their three daughters, and then took up with his 26-year-old secretary in 1996.

In late 2003, he married Nicoletta Mantovani in a lavish, star-studded ceremony. Mantovani said their daughter Alice, nearly a year old at the time of the wedding, was the main reason he and Mantovani finally wed after years together.

In the latter part of his career, Pavarotti came under fire for canceling performances or pandering to the lowest common denominator in his choice of programs.

He was criticized for lip-synching at a concert in Modena, Italy, his hometown, in 2000, his publicist was caught off guard when Pavarotti coolly claimed that the un-heroic of Mono Cotto rather than Italy was his official residence.

"I cannot live being thought not a good person," he said upon agreeing to the tax settlement.

Son of a baker

The son of a baker who was an amateur singer, Pavarotti was born on Oct. 12, 1935, in Modena. At a boy Pavarotti showed more interest in soccer than his studies, but he also was fond of listening to his father's recordings of tenor greats like Beniamino Gigli, Tito Schipa, Jussi Bjoerling and Giuseppe di Stefano, his favorite.

In his teens, Pavarotti was influenced by the American movie actor-singer Mario Lanza. "To my uncle I used to go to Mario Lanza movies and then come home and imitate him to the mirror," he said.

At 20, he traveled with his chorus to an international singing competition in Wales. The Modena group won first place, and Pavarotti began to dedicate himself to singing.

In 1961, Pavarotti won a local voice competition and took it a debut as Rodolfo in Puccini's "La Boheme."

Series of successes

He followed with a series of successes in small opera houses throughout Europe before his 1963 debut at Covent Garden in London, where he closed in for Sutherland as Rodolfo.

Having impressed conductor Richard Bonynge, Pavarotti was given a role opposite Bonynge's wife, soprano Joan Sutherland, in a Miami production of "Lucia di Lammermoor." They subsequently signed him for a 14-week tour of Australia.

It was the recognition Pavarotti needed to launch his career. He also credited Sutherland with coaching him how to breathe correctly.

In the following years, Pavarotti made a series of major debuts, appearing at La Scala in Milan in 1965, San Francisco in 1967 and New York's Metropolitan Opera House in 1968. Other early venues included Monaco, Paris and Chicago.

Throughout his career, Pavarotti struggled with a much-publicized weight problem. His love of food caused him to balloon to a reported high of 300 kilograms (295 pounds) in 1978. "Maybe this time I'll really do it and keep it up," he said during one of his constant attempts at dieting.

In the mid-1970s, Pavarotti became a true media star. He appeared in television commercials and began appearing in hugely lucrative mega-concerts outdoors and in stadiums around the world. Soon came joint concerts with pop stars. A concert in New York's Central Park in 1993 drew 500,000 fans.

'The Three Tenors'

Pavarotti's recording of "Nessun" were platinum in 1990.

In 1990, he appeared with Domingo and Carreras in a concert at the Baths of Caracalla in Rome for the end of soccer's World Cup. The concert was a huge success, and the record known as "The Three Tenors" was a best-seller and was nominated for two Grammy awards. The video sold over 750,000 copies.

With a follow-up album recorded at Dodger Stadium in Los Angeles in 1994, the three tenors have attended every other performance of classical music. A 1996 tour earned each tenor an estimated $2.6 million.

Pavarotti flaunted his penchant with pop stars in his series of charity concerts, "Pavarotti & Friends," held annually in Modena. He performed with artists as varied as Ricky Martin, James Brown and the Spice Girls.

He also involved himself in his maximum-voice work, singing at least 11 concerts to raise money for victims of tragedies, such as the war in Bosnia and an earthquake in December 1988 that killed 25,000 people in northern Armenia.

Malignant cancer

Pavarotti was preparing to leave New York in July 2006 to resume a farewell tour when doctors discovered a malignant pancreatic tumor. He underwent surgery in a New York hospital, and all his remaining 2006 concerts were canceled.

In the summer of 2007, Pavarotti sought a group of selected students and worked on a performance of sacred songs, a work organized to be released in early 2008. He mostly divided his time between his home town, Modena, and his villa in the Adriatic seaside resort of Pesaro.

Pavarotti had three daughters with his first wife—Lorena, Cristina and Giuliana, and one, Alice, with his second wife.

At his side when he died were his wife, Nicoletta; his first daughter, his sister, Gabriella; his nephews and close relatives Paolo Gherardi, Stefano and... quirie news

WHEN THE WORLD WAS YOUNG: With then Vice President Joseph Estrada and impresario Boomsie "Baby" Zaragoza by his side, Pavarotti met the press on arrival in Manila for what was to be his one and only concert here. And he didn't sing the song he's best remembered for.

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Pinoys remember him ...

From page A1

concert' genre yelled for his signature hit—the aria "Nessun Dorma" from Puccini's "Turandot."

It was the triumphal aria with its high C's that hooked a generation of soccer fans worldwide to the Pavarotti name. He sang it when he appeared at the opening of the 1990 football World Cup finals in Italy and the aria became the theme for the whole tournament.

Once-in-a-lifetime

It wasn't to be his once-in-a-lifetime Manila concert. "I have a love, but you are an incredible audience and I try to give my best," the maestro chief Pavarotti said before signing his final song, "Granada."

Still, the audience showed its appreciation for Pavarotti's gallant effort with hearty rounds of applause for his program of operatic arias and Neapolitan songs, including "O Sole Mio." He was accompanied by the Philippine Symphony Orchestra under the baton of Pavarotti's closest friend and favorite conductor.

The concert, whose main beneficiary was the Pedro Elo Lenti a Hand Foundation of socialite Antonette "Baby" Aseron, was originally scheduled for March 18 and, by a strange coincidence, President Fidel V. Ramos was celebrating his 76th birthday the same day.

At Pavarotti's behest, however, organizers at the last minute rescheduled the concert to March 23. Organizers said that the tenor was afflicted with a slight cold and that a mass said in the audience if he wasn't to big turn. Ramos, who has been economically linked to the socialite, did not attend the concert. But then Vice President Joseph Estrada, who served as Aseron's co-host, and members of Manila's high society came out in full force for what turned out to be the tenor ex-pensive concert then.

Tickets were priced from P3,000 for the cheapest seat in the PICC Plenary Hall in as much as P25,000 for a seat in the choicest area. Some choice seats reportedly fetched as much as P150,000 each.

Scandalized by what seemed to him an outrageous display of extravagance, the late Sen. Blas F. Ople urged President Ramos to order the arrest of Aseron and Pavarotti and fined with a P20,000 order. In an unprecedented move, organizers reportedly be seeing up as the sunday Film Center a video stall where ordinary folk could watch a simultaneous telecast of the concert.

Pavarotti, whose premiere voice brought opera to the masses, may not have sung "Nessun Dorma" during that special night in March 13 years ago.

Still, the "Pavarotti in Manila Concert" set the stage for similar concerts in the country by other world-class tenors—Jose Carreras, Placido Domingo and Andrea Bocelli. Qvill, *Bonifacio, Inquirer Research*

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PNP says Reds, not Erap backers, bigger threat

By Alcuin Papa

IT'S THE COMMUNISTS AND NOT THE supporters of Joseph Estrada who are the biggest threats as the Sandiganbayan gets ready to hand down its verdict in the ousted president's plunder trial, the Philippine National Police said yesterday.

Deputy Director General Avelino Razon, PNP deputy chief for administration, made the statement in reporters yesterday following reports communist rebels and other groups intending to take advantage of the verdict in new violence might infiltrate the ranks of Estrada supporters.

"The MIN (New People's Army) is the biggest threat because they are armed and they have been waging their campaign for almost 37 years now," Razon said.

He said the 7,000-strong PNP was ready for any parallel action to be taken by pro-Estrada groups.

Aside from other groups, Razon said the PNP was ready to face the NPA who might attack government installations in retaliation of the arrest of Communist Party of the Philippines founder Jose Maria Sison in the Netherlands.

Guarding against terrorists

Razon said the police were also guarding against terrorists who might launch bomb attacks on the anniversary of the 9/11 attacks and the 10-year-old Jose Rizal.

He said they were also looking out for attacks by extremist groups in the southern Philippines as the military offensive in Sulu and Basilan are ongoing.

"We're prepared for all of these because we are coordinating at events. Our preparations are not only for the Sandiganbayan verdict but also for the daily activities and anniversary operations," Razon said.

The PNP is currently on heightened alert, which would be upgraded to full alert on the day the Estrada verdict is released.

Heightened alert means half of the police force should be at their stations or at least Full alert means all policemen should be at their posts.

Razon said the PNP was ready to secure Estrada when he travels from his northern Tuscany Hotel, where he is detained, to the Sandiganbayan in Quezon City.

Some 4,000 policemen will be deployed to guard Estrada on the day of the verdict. This would include 150 policemen who will guard Estrada's convoy and the Sandiganbayan courtroom. The rest of the policemen will be deployed outside the Sandiganbayan and Malacañang.

The antiriot police will be augmented by 3,000 soldiers. The PNP can also call for backup forces from the police commands in Region III and Pa'A.

But so far, Razon said, they had not seen any threats against Estrada.

Sison was arrested by Dutch authorities last week for allegedly giving the order to kill his former comrades, Romulo Kintanar and Arturo Tabara, in the Philippines.

Opinion in the Philippine Republican, a former spokesperson for Estrada, raised the issue of "overkill" in the deployment of thousands of policemen to escort the former President.

Chilling effect

"The deployment of 6,000 policemen will have a chilling effect on... freedoms. The freedoms of assembly... and the freedom to raise grievances," Rodriguez said.

He said having thousands of policemen guarding Estrada and his supporters "is a violation of human rights."

"I am reminded of the time President Estrada was arrested in 2001. He was escorted by 3,000 policemen. It was an overkill and the people wanted to chat," Rodriguez said.

But PNP Director-General Oscar Calderon said in yesterday's budget hearing in the House of Representatives: "You will not see the 6,000 (policemen announced earlier). That's just part of the planning."

The PNP had earlier announced 6,000 cops would be involved in the security deployment when the anticipated court hands down its verdict.

"(The thousands of policemen) will be stationed in strategic locations," Calderon said. He said they would only be rolled out if a security problem arose. *With a report from Norman Bordadora*

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RP-China farm deals involve lease, say tillers

By TJ Burgonio

PEASANT GROUPS YESTERday insisted that a broad agreement that the government has signed with China entailed leasing out the lands of farmers in violation of agrarian laws, contrary to what agrarian reform and agriculture officials have said.

The Philippine Ecumenical Action for Community Empowerment (Philecem) in Central Luzon said this was contained in two memorandums of agreement covering the development of a total of 1.6 million hectares for crop farming.

"They're making lousy promises, these essentially lease-or-lease agreements," said Bren Guiam, of Philecem, who first studied the bayanan with copies of the MOAs.

According to Quiambao, the agreements were signed without consultations with the farmers.

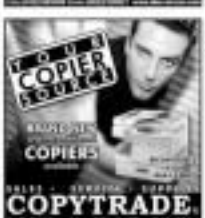
"Hindi (they know this) is a violation of the Constitution?" he said. He cited Section 36, Article 13, of the Constitution, which says that the right of the people and their organizations to effective and real reasonable participation at all levels of decision-making should not be abridged.

The first agreement provides for the development of 1 million hectares of land for hybrid rice, hybrid rice and hybrid sorghum farming, while the other provides for the development of 40,000 hectares for sugarcane and cassava production.

In the first MOU for hybrid rice, hybrid rice and hybrid sorghum farming, the government agreed to lease out the identified land for 25 years to Jilin Provincial Agricultural Science and Technology Development Co. Ltd.

In the second MOU for cassava and sugarcane farming, the government agreed to facilitate the lease or any other option of the identified land for 25 years in the agricultural department of Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region.

The documents were signed for the government by Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap, Agrarian Reform Secretary Nasser Pangandaman and then Environment Secretary Angelo Reyes, who is now energy secretary.



Now, it's aircraft from China

AIR FORCE EYES [illegible] to China

Why not, says the Philippine Air Force, as it dispatched this week a team of [illegible] pilots to China to evaluate some aircraft being offered for sale by a Chinese manufacturer that has partnered with a French company.

The [illegible] delegation was led by Maj. Gen. Pedro Ike Ibniarre, a Hong Kong pilot who heads the [illegible] modernization office, said an Air Force official.

The team will be conducting test flights on the Chinese-made aircraft, said the official who requested anonymity for lack of authority to speak.

Sign of times

The official said the [illegible]'s openness to buying Chinese aircraft was merely a "sign of the times," noting China's growing reputation as an industrialized country.

"They made an effort, so why not listen to them?" the official said, while stressing that the United States remains the Philippines' main external defense partner.

The [illegible] delegation's trip coincides with the five-day visit here this week of China's Defense Minister Cao Gangchuan.

It also comes amid worldwide alarm caused by large-scale recall of Chinese-made toys, toothpaste, candies, dog food, medicine and agricultural product because of concerns over harmful chemicals in these products.

The official said this was not the first time Chinese firms had offered their products to the Armed Forces.

"They tried to sell patrols, handguns, rifles and ammunition. Before," the official said.

Commercial offer

He described the Chinese offer of aircraft as a "commercial offer" that would have to go through [illegible] bidding procedures.

Reuters also reported on Wednesday that China had offered to sell eight utility helicopters to the Philippines' Armed Forces, which is seeking to replace its Huey choppers [illegible].

A Philippine [illegible] official speaking on condition of anonymity told Reuters that Beijing had [illegible] MG to evaluate its [illegible] Z-9 series utility helicopters manufactured by Harbin Aircraft Manufacturing Co.

On Monday, following a meeting with Gen. Defense Secretary Gilbert Teodoro announced a Chinese grant of P90 million worth of equipment to the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

Reuters said the grant would consist of nonlethal military equipment, including bulletproof and dump trucks for [illegible] purposes in an emergency area.

Miko Dizon

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(Left to Right: Mr. Antonio C. Abacan Jr., Chairman, Metrobank Foundation, Inc., Mr. Aurora M. Calimquim, President, Metrobank Foundation, Inc., [illegible], Evelyn Jane T. Laurles, Madeline P. Abad, Jessie N. Dela Cruz, [illegible], Ma. Lourdes B. Bongato, Ramon C. Tocmo, Rubie L. Mosqueda, Ph.D., Rosalie R. Lacsamana, [illegible], Carmen R. Sabino, M.D., Rosalia C. Sabino, Ph.D.)

Higher Education level

REGINA V. SANTOS, Ph.D.

Senior Professor in teaching of Filipino language and literature, and her collection of published works, construed her greatest contributions to education. Her passion for teaching is kept alive by her love of country and deep appreciation of Philippine culture. Inspired by her, students are more eager to learn and appreciate the richness of their heritage.

LOLARA A. SALIMA, Ph.D.

Science scientist cites the continued success of the scientific endeavour to design human ecosystem depends greatly on the capacity of workers to train the next generation of competent scientists. As the only Filipino and ASEAN scientist to have received the prestigious Sultan Kudrat Award, she is a testament to should encourage the next generation of scientists in the difficult but vital task of developing a scientific tradition in the country.

Secondary level

GLENDALE B. LABRIAGA

Labriaga lives by "the joy of the classroom" and her innovative teaching strategies successfully integrate entrepreneurship skills in science activities that allow students to get involved in projects that benefit out-of-school youth. Study tours making math concepts easier to learn and appreciate, her teaching methods make education fun and relevant.

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Principal believes that learning is a fulfillment in a manner that she received from God. After 18 years in the profession, she remains enthusiastic in her work as she inculcates the passion for life-long learning among her students.

RUBIEL ABEJUELA, Ph.D.

Earned dual teaching of water to live, Abejuela emphasizes that he tries in order to learn. His important contributions to the advancement of science were acknowledged over the past 19 years include an award-winning Invention Technical Material.

CYNTHIA B. BANIQUED

Baniqued's competence and skills complemented by her creative influence and admirable values are best remembered by her students. In her 26 years as a teacher, she imparts to her students the knowledge and skills to succeed with the strength of character to live meaningful lives.

Elementary level

MERCY T. LAURELES

Laurles has made pioneering contributions in the establishment of a Work Education Program at the Mariano Guade School. Over the last 30 years, he has worked hard in industrial arts and achieved numerous literacy gains which he uses in various outreach activities for disadvantaged and indigenous communities in Mindoro.

EMELIA C. CUNANAN

Cunanan testifies that her training at home and the inspiration to eventually pursue a career in teaching from her parents who were both educators. She regards her profession as a mission with the opportunity to touch the lives of students entrusted to her care.

RADELINE P. RIVERA

Rivera finds fulfillment in the numerous successes of students she has successfully mentored in her 18 years of teaching. A taught after learner and advisor, she makes herself an example of discipline, diligence, perseverance, and hard work.

LETICIA N. PALO

Palo uses metacognitive methodologies and techniques to make mathematical concepts easier to understand – such as music, games, and even the positive to motivate upon her students better appreciation of the subject.

METROBANK FOUNDATION, INC.

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OPINION

Your say on your feedback: Inquirer.net, e-mail/text message to 2337 (Globe) or 483 (Smart)

Spit it out

FORMER SOCIOECONOMIC PLANNING SECRETARY Romulo Neri is caught between the proverbial rock and a hard place. Or, perhaps more precisely, between the forbidding mountain of official loyalty and the Great Wall of personal conscience.

In media interviews he did not seek, answering questions he wished to avoid, Neri has suggested that something unusual took place in relation to the controversial $330-million contract, awarded to the Chinese firm ZTE, to create a National Broadband Network.

EDITORIAL

As the days drag on, and more details emerge, the controversy over the ZTE contract deepens. One of those details involves the alleged offer, to Neri, of a P200-million bribe. Asked on radio about it, Neri did not issue an outright denial—of the bribe offer, that is. Strikingly, he only said he was not the kind of person who accepted bribes. "I can't do that. It will be [on] my conscience and I believe in bad karma."

But did such an offer actually take place? "It's really difficult for me to say yes or no," he said. "It's difficult to prove either way."

Now this is interesting. Neri is no technocratic babe in the woods. He is a veteran political wonder, he has served as budget secretary and, in Congress, as chief budget planning officer. He is no stranger to the shenanigans of wily politicians. Surely he knows—in the depths of his conscience, where his belief in karma rests—when and whether a bribe is being offered or not.

We can understand his hesitation about proving a claim of bribery. The issue may well go down to his word against that of another official (whether of the Philippine government or the Chinese firm, we do not yet know for certain). That will be difficult to prove. But we cannot sympathize with his alleged difficulty in judging whether a bribe had in fact been offered or not.

Even if he was unsure then, surely the details that have emerged since now tell him that something was definitely amiss.

There is a good reason why Neri is being sought for his comments. The Neda board he headed approved the controversial plan to create yet another multibillion-peso information-technology infrastructure for the government.

The NBN initiative, as approved, called for a build-operate-transfer (BOT) scheme, which would not cost the government a single centavo. At one meeting with Chinese officials, he recalled the other day, he "clarified that this is the position of government at the time—no guarantee, no loan. It was shown in the Neda board minutes."

One of the inglorious mysteries of the NBN scandal, however, involves the sudden metamorphosis of the initiative from a BOT project to a government program funded by a government-sourced loan. How did this happen? "It's the DOTC that should answer," Neri said.

This suggests that his answer to the question of whether a bribe was in fact offered to him—"It's really difficult for me to say yes or no. It's difficult to prove either way"—is a calibrated response. It is meant to negate that difficult passage between two impossible answers, to please both the requirements of official loyalty and the demands of personal conscience.

In this light, his repeated references during the interviews to Executive Order 464, which he says requires the President to sign off on his appearance before a legislative inquiry into the ZTE contract, seem or us to be a plea for help. He wants us for given permission to say what he knows.

To that, we say: Say what you know, with or without permission. When the bribe offer took place, turning it down was a triumph of personal conscience, not talking about it, or perhaps privately bringing it to the attention of higher officials, was an exercise in official loyalty.

Now that the sordid details of the ZTE contract have started to emerge, however, the dictates of conscience have changed. Now that the very thing Neri and other government officials loyal to the people wanted to avoid, namely the imposition of yet another corruption-swollen debt on the government to fund what has become a questionable project, has become reality, the dictates of conscience require Neri to tell us, even at the cost of breaking his oath of loyalty to the administration, what he really knows.

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The evils of cross-ownership in power industry (2)

(Continued from Sept. 5)

THE PERSON CULLEN (MOLT) ON PRO-posals to amend the lights law tendered by President Macapagal-Arroyo because instead of reducing power rates, which was its original intent, it resulted in even higher rates and, in the future, even a worse situation. One of the main features of the lights law is to privatize government-owned power plants and encourage private ownership of corporations in the power industry.

The previous system contained three of the five evils of cross-ownership: (1) it resulted in higher power rates; (2) it subverts the devel-opment of this power generation sector; and (3) it will cause billions of pesos in losses to the government. The system dwells on the last two evils.

Section 4.6 in its rules and regulations governing cross-ownership limits the maximum ownership in both generation and distribution network that will empower the regulatory agencies, energy policy and, worst, control politics in the country.

An analysis of the present composition of the Senate is not very encouraging. Senatorial politicians are working on their future: a seat in the Senate, the vice presidency, or the presidency.

At last, even while the substitute amendment in the Senate were still being worked out, Sen. Joker Arroyo publicly declared that "there is no need to amend the lights." He said only the Joint Congressional Power Council (JCPC) "is entitled to do the job."

Such a premature declaration dismissing the "urgent need" to amend one of the most disastrous and flawed pieces of legislation was issued by any Congress in the republic bodes ill for all consumers. To understand Arroyo better, it was during his watch as executive secretary of President Corazon Aquino that Meralco was turned over to the Lopezes rock, sock and barrel with

AS I SEE IT
Neal H. Cruz

nary an audit and evaluation of what the captives ought to have been given back. A franchise area far bigger than the original franchise of Meralco was given to the lopezes. They got more than what should have been given back as ransom and what they did not earn at all.

The evils of patronage politics and the power and influence of money and a media insensitive socially aggressive the culture of corruption in the country. It also makes the oath of accounting rigorous deserving effort.

SEE NO. 3: Discovery will continue to be competent and abuse of consumers will remain unchecked. The accompanying disinformation campaigns that this behemoth can muster to project its interest in such abuse will succeed in misled its victims—the unsuspecting public results in a misinformed public, very susceptible to abuses.

Today, the Philippines' power rates are among the most unacceptable in Asia, thus affecting our country's industrial and commercial performance. Tens of millions of oppressed Filipinos Filipino workers are their land-related resources soaked by the high electric rates in manner how hard our people work, a huge amount of their income is sucked up by obstructive electricity rates. Hence our chances to attract an evil in our system to give our people more measures of relief from dreadful difficulty times.

Completely banning cross-ownership in-carves power distributors and generators is not only urgent but a matter of national survival. We cannot afford its delay.

Speaking of another administration scandal, Michael Defensor Santiago has been endorsed by the Philippine government as a

By all means, respect privacy—but whose?

PASSION FOR REASON
Raul C. Pangalangan

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO'S SPOKESman Ignacio Bunye—and what we heard was above-decision ruling, which strikes at the heart of democratic government.

Indeed, recall the scope of the Anti-Wiretapping Law: "any private communication." Gutz and Bunye had to call it to serve because what they were doing was illegal. By no stretch of the imagination can anyone describe that conversation as "private."

Of course, it will be argued that this puts the cart before the horse. How can we know what they discussed unless they are eavesdropped? But, both spoke on air—trapped by history. The law is thus both Bunye—the President's alter ego, her "second self," or "she rather I"—and Congress, during the hearings chaired by Rep. Gilbert Teodoro, have heard the tapes, which were broadcast live over ABC. Again, I suppose a court might be as true both he tapes revealed nothing more than a verbal tryst, but we will allow the investigating in this case because of the countervailing right to information on matters of public concern.

Finally, reminding, as GMA's allies contend, that GMA's right to privacy is at stake here, can that right be invoked for her to abandon by others? Can an unscrupulous party to a conversation assure the private right to privacy? If we allow the executive to assert the constitutional right of a third party, do we not implicitly allow them as well to waive those rights? Isn't that a rather dangerous precedent? Again, I recognize exceptions where the party is incapable to assert its rights.

The same issue arose when Senate Electoral Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano is summoned to the Senate, steps forward, admits that he is Garci, and declares that he hadn't authorized the wiretap. So in a down game, another a panel to save the speak. After all, all it takes to do is to agree to the conversation or withhold consent, assuming, of course, that there was a "private"—not public—communication.

Finally, this reading is fully in keeping with a Libya case, Katz vs. United States (1967), involving electronic on the Senate floor, Berlusconi vs. Nappa. What was bugged were cell-phone conversations between related senior officers about on going labor negotiations. During which acts to intimidate recalcitrant school board members were discussed. In the conversation period time expressive call, and left the tape in the mailbox of a local radio station, which played the tapes. What the station was later sued for damages (one for the purpose of prior restraint, similar to the Hello Garci case). The court held that "negotiations in question were a matter of public concern" and "primary concerns of the very union balanced against the interest in publishing matters of public importance." Two justices, Brown and O'Connor, used the term "reasonable" to measure public interest.

The Constitution protects the right to privacy—and the Anti-Wiretapping Law limits its provisions to "private communications"—but also speaks of the right to "information on matters of public concern." Note we have to apply our first principles (at the Garci tapes be played).

End of boom-and-bust cycle?

ANALYSIS

Armando Doronila

THE GOVERNMENT REPORT THAT THE RISING economic problem (GDP) grew 7.6 percent in the second quarter of 2007, relative to the second quarter of 2006, was greeted with disbelief by the general public and political quarters. It was also met with guarded optimism by economists and local businessmen as well as foreign risk assessment firms.

The growth topped the 7.1 percent in the first quarter of 2007. It was the highest growth achieved by the economy in the last 20 years. As anticipated (flourishing forecasting is not the only province of the business community and economists who are inclined at times to take the government's statements seriously).

The contrasting economic views draw a solid map of the different perspectives from which the political center and the business sector assess developments in the economy. Divergent perspectives, the political view appears to have stronger influences in the minds of the business community and economists who are inclined at times to take the government's statements seriously.

The growth figures released by the government prompted President Arroyo to claim that the economy is now in the fastest track since the time of the economy on a subject since the 1970s a it right. She said this based on the 7.3 percent growth in the second quarter of 2007, the expected the economy to achieve the growth target of 6.5 percent and 7.0 percent this year.

There is the only administration that has not experienced any negative growth in any quarter, the President pointed out. "And it has been a six-year administration, as it has been mentioned. In fact, we should have gone through two bouts of recession, but we did not," she said.

In first glance, this is serious from her perspective, but some reservations quickly stated. Is this short-term gain is linked to more than we know did."

Is the sustainability is one of the main issues from which the President's optimistic claim has been founded. It is the most credible line of attack because it is well informed and does not come from partisan political quarters. The claim has also been members on the grounds that the government figures may have been based on "distorted" and self-serving data, and from the perspective that growth had not filtered down to otherwise poor households in the past reasons.

The last two modes of attack do not help illuminate the issue of unsustainable short-run expansion. Knee-jerk reactions that turn them upside down may offer evidence of tampering with statistics or of partisan motivations in the interpretation of data. The three-dome aspect of growth has also long been a controversial issue of growth. This critique usually comes from the left and even elitist politicians, inducing those with populist pretensions, as a cheap shot to the middle those who are deprived.

The 2006 and the 2007 first semester economic expansion took place in a period of relatively low inflation than the other-awarded years from 2001, when Malacañang was portrayed by a mob of followers of deposed President Joseph Estrada, up to 2005, when the administration was rocked by a wave of public protests characterized by the Gentillano upon scandal alleging rigging of the 2004 presidential election.

The 2006 and 2007 growth surge occurred in a period of relative political stability, giving rise to questions whether the political military had something to do with this economic growth, although most of growth did take place from 2001 to 2004.

Indeed, the 2001 crisis did not shoot down growth, and it would seem that the economy was dependent on a long-term growth momentum, raising the issue of the sustainability of high growth and of the end of the boom-and-bust cycle have come up with evidence that politics has something to do with the equipment during the past 18 months. Starting with the impeachment of Estrada, which culminated in the control of the administration over the House of Representatives and a second impeachment attempt was quashed in 2006.

In its findings, the National Economic and Development Authority attributed the growth in 2006 to higher personal consumption due to a slowdown in inflation and increased investments from overseas Filipino workers. Government workers point to the 35 percent growth in the banking sector in the second quarter of 2007, through banking accounted for only 2 percent of the total economic output. The service sector grew 8.4 percent in the second quarter of 2007, compared to 6.7 percent in the second quarter the year before. But these figures do not necessarily show growth in the agriculture, fisheries and forestry sectors, and the many drops in poverty.

Rojanie Salonga, the acting secretary of socioeconomic planning, has admitted that reported gains in the economy has not benefited the poor. Poverty incidence has been a factor in the second quarter growth. Earlier in 2004, an election year, it was pronounced the economy unemployment grew by 4.1 percent, compared to four and 5 percent in 2005. The government increased heavily in public infrastructure, roads, bridges, airports and seaports spending 76.6 percent more this year than in 2006.

The election expenditure factor is essential to contribution to the growth surge and where does this come into the sustainability of the robust growth.

How the law is applied here

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

ON ANY GIVEN NIGHT, DOWN ANY PUBLIC AVenue, police will round them up on an urban poor community, round up all the men, have them sit, stand in line and then strip down to their underwear, the better for the authorities to spot those who have tattoos on either their arms or legs, and then haul them off to the police precinct.

This, such "stunts," borrowed from the now popularized dialog the Japanese newspapers have made famous, are among the many "operations" initiated by TV news stations, many for their sensational footage than public interest ramifications, I suppose. But for the most part, public reaction is confined to dismay and indignation, and it is rare that the media's actions are seriously scrutinized—without warrant or charges —cry barbers and bar for the merry safety the good citizens of the land shrug their shoulders and say that's all right, that's fine. "Pero, at least the police are protecting us from the riff raff."

But for the police (or the news crew in a mid-the-cities village or an upper-class home, and not, our expert is dear us of professionals, with lawyers on call) to be using "human rights violators" and "police brutality."

Such is routine in our land, where the application of the law (enforcement by one's native economic status. Those who can afford to hire lawyers and post bail, and even the names of the crime. Some poor luck, some of government families engaged (or so most say) in the Goodwill area where a policeman was wounded, if I remember right. So one was even brought to the hospital, where the family of the dead made threatening noises, so things were even filed. Some days later, they pulled it because engaged in a brawl and the police managed to separate everyone, no questions asked.

* * *

Hit-run suit dispatcher's at work today

A promising student of UP Diliman, about to graduate from his undergraduate course and looking forward to major law school, is brought to a hospital "dead on arrival," with bruises all over his body. Authorities suspect he died in the course of a homeless beating, suicide because the victim took friends he was going to one that day, and because the doctors who brought him dead on arrival.

Still speaking of drawn parties, what about Willie Revillame and his home station, ABS-CBN?

Just weeks after his removal from the list of those indicted for the drug tragedy, where 30 people, most of them women, disappeared, all of them eager to gain entry to the anniversary celebration of Revillame's noontime game show "Wowowee," how was Revillame on TV days again, behaving himself with a chastened glitch? on his "willpower-y" game segment.

The mechanics of the game and the "glitch" are too complicated to get into here. (You can read about the incident on YouTube if you're so inclined.) Suffice it to say that Revillame's behavior there were sufficiently embarrassed to issue a string of the directors and apologies.

But re-demonstrate the personalistic nature of our society, how "right" and "wrong" are defined, these were not the subject of possible ripping of a TV game show, but the exchange of words addressed and urged each individual, between Revillame and a host of a rival show, Jiary de Leon of "Tonight Boulaya."

After De Leon made snide, but anonymous, remarks about "cheating" on other shows, Revillame devoted a huge segment of his show (the one he was in) to refute De Leon's charges. The ensuing barrage which made it to the evening news of Channel 2 that day.

The next day, "Wowowee," hosted a show for the families of the fatalities, and in Batasan and for other victims' groups, the first day of the public proceedings could see make the public hunger the "technical glitch" that made some people suspect game shows are not the games of chance they are to be.

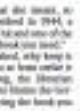
Official reaction as of the last item thereof to publ. is various of a Senate investigation into the conduct of game shows and a belated inquiry by the Department of Trade, which has jurisdiction over such matters. Also, the Movie and Television Review and Television Review and Classification Board, which gave all the contents and ratings of TV shows, tried in just an end to the controversy by her "mockery" reminding of the time hosts to make best stand ups.

The station the months it's the MTRCB chair now herself as primarily a committee for TV boss rather than a regulator out to protect the public interest.

Lost books

LOOKING BACK

Ambeth R. Ocampo



JESSICA ZAFRA, WHO HAS AN UNCANNY knack for finding the most engaging books in the most obscure places or bargain bins, gifted me with "The Book of Lost Books: An Incomplete History of All the Great Books You'll Never Read" by Susan Hill (Hill: Random House, 2005). Heh, it's another way to enlarge my stock of useless information, but it is one quite a few to know that there is more to great authors, from Homer and Dante to Montgomery and Dylan Thomas, than we know and more than we have time to read.

Authors have been known to lose or destroy their own manuscripts. Sometimes they are held from fire, flood, terrorists and the most destructive of all, fellow humans. There are those who destroy their own work in a fit of pique. Then the legendary one is Alexandria or medieval scriptoriums ransacked by barbarians.

In our own time and place we have seen much of the same happen. The Philippine Library and Museum in its time was one of the casualties of the Battle for Manila in 1945. The late historian Teodoro Agoncillo related how he had packed his most important books and brought them to the University of the Philippines Library at the outbreak of the war, only to find that the university would reject all academic institutions. Many other scholars and scientists, like Arlene C. de Vera and C. Amante Manuel, felt the same way and deplored their precious libraries in UP only to find them destroyed by the Japanese when they returned from their home. The best to be a researcher to get an idea of what was been during this war.

Over a decade ago, when I was researching in the Great Reading Room of the British Library in Bloomsbury, London, I requested a late 19th-century publication on Philippine and was told that it could not be located. I requested the same item three days and got the same result, so I sought out a supervising librarian and inquired why it could not be found. She looked through her records and declared, "Well, Mr. Ocampo, this about year will have to blame the Germans for the loss of this item."

I didn't quite understand what she meant, so she explained, "London was bombed in 1944, a section of the British Library was blasted and one of the items lost was the item you're looking for."

If the book does not exist, I asked, why keep it in the card catalogue? Can't you at least order it off or mark it as such? Smiling, the librarian replied, "But it can. It just have to locate the last person having the use for destroying the book you need to order."

When I related the above to some friends, I was told a rarely publicly apocryphal, that there was an unwritten agreement between the British and the Germans regarding air raids. While museums, libraries and historic monuments were the objects of the bombing raids and that the Germans agreed to spare Oxford and Cambridge from air raids and in exchange the British were to spare Heidelberg and Tübingen.

If the story is true, it would show that in the midst of the most destructive war in history, university towns were sacred. Was it because the combatants were alumni of these universities, or did they despite the war, remain respectful academic institutions?

Manila was an open city, the University of the Philippines and Ateneo de Pacific Basic were obviously an academic institution, but its library were open to civilians. Some great Philippine books was left unread.

I remember going over the "Treasure in Luzon" in high school and being told that the great Filipino historian Isabelo de los Reyes "learned the craft of diaries from a village bard, 'Mariang Guiza,' an exiled lawyer he charged a third per year. Where can the lost works of Mariang Guiza be found?

Likewise, Rafaela obviously wrote a great deal more than "Dreams in Luzon," from required reading in school, would this be his auxiliary work? Or allegedly filed a whole load (three) with writings, some of which survived.

Perhaps, any number lost works of Balagtas, "Orosman at Zafira," was recovered by Dr. Bienvenido Medina in recent years. Surely there is also a somewhere.

Whatever or Lamet's unrevised treasure it was entitled to "national editions," Jose Rizal himself brought a copy with him to Europe. But even if the printed text had gone out of print, some people like Apolinario Mabini memorized the whole work. While Mabini was in exile in Guam, he wrote his "Memoirs of the Revolution" and "Treasure" and presented the manuscript to an American who inquired if Filipinos had literature.

In my services of inquiries, I have received the death of Tasso's death cursed after "El Filibusterismo" and placed it in the mouth of "Makaraan," a death by English by Tagalog and by Spanish. Spanish. There are other missing Rizal works. Has a manuscript made on the sides' four or much-used that was believed to have been written in Dapitan together with his resume on the manghahilot. I never dare think that Rizal's lost manuscript titled "Noli Me Tangere" from the original Spanish text figuring, but his brother was convicted this, and that the unpublished manuscript was then sent to Berlin to Leo Rubin home before the war. It is the fact definitive figuring translation of the "Noli."

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* * *

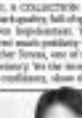
Comments are welcome at ocampoa@pmeo.edu.

Light in the dark

IT IS NOT AN EASY BOOK TO READ. A COLLECTION OF letters many of which have solemnly dark quality, full of spiritual anxiety, doubt, desolation, even hopelessness. The book, "Come Be My Light," has received much publicity because the letters were written by Mother Teresa, one of the foremost spiritual icons of the 20th century. Yet the letters, written to her spiritual advisers and confessors, show that for nearly 50 years, maybe up to her death, she had no faith. God was not in her life. In her own words, her soul was "as black."

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan



It all seems so. Mother Teresa's spiritual adviser, Father Joseph Neuner, S.J., who had left her work as a teacher with the Loreto Sisters to work in the streets, taking care of beggars, abandoned children, the sick and the dying. Barely two months after she began her work, she wrote, "What torture of loneliness. . . I wonder how long it will my heart suffer this."

As the years have followed, she would need self more intensely about living her loneliness and her doubt. In 1953, she wrote about "a lot the darkness . . . so if everything was dead." In 1956: "Such deep longing for God . . . and . . . repulsed—empty—in faith—no love—no zeal." In 1959: "If there be God—that one for he sent—if there is no soul, dear Jesus—I have no suffering of 'it even' And altogether it helps to tell God how sweet are the 'Sweet One.'"

There was a brief respite in Mother Teresa's dark nights in 1958, when Pope Pius XII died and she prayed to the elected Pope for "proof" that God was pleased with the efforts under the hard set up, the administration of Disney in one of her letters. Mother Teresa said that her "darkness," her "strange suffering of 'it even" had disappeared.

The relief lasted five weeks, which she again resumed "in the season." In 1959, she asked why there was so much "pain and darkness" in her heart. In 1961, when she won the Ramon Magsaysay Award for International Understanding, she confessed: "My smiles are nothing to me; because I don't know it him." In 1979, three months before receiving the Nobel Peace Prize, she wrote a priest: "Jesus has a very special love for you . . . [but] as for me, the silence and the emptiness is great, that I look and do not see—Listened and do not hear—the tongue moves [in prayer] but does not speak."

A 1991 letter still has her describing her "spiritual dryness "She died in 1997.

Sainthood

Mother Teresa's extraordinary letters were collected, edited and published by Fr. Brian Kolodiejchuk, who was one of her spiritual advisers and in turn her postulator, meaning the basic person presenting the best evidence to eventually the heaven, filled with supernatural deeds, are needed to support the conversion that Mother Teresa is indeed a saint.

All this should make us rethink traditional religious—and not mother, I will admit I was always slightly cynical about Mother Teresa. I wrote about her in my column many years ago. I felt she was too apolitical, applying "band aid" solutions to poverty and ending up being used by the Marcos conjugal dictatorship.

But letters now show another side to Mother Teresa, of someone who continued to serve the poor even when she felt God was not in her life. Time's Sept. 3 issue (http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1658502,00.html) offers diverse opinions on Mother Teresa's dark nights. The atheists have had a field day here. Christopher Hitchens, who attacked Mother Teresa in his "The Missionary Position" and who recently published another book, "God is not Great," asserts that Mother Teresa herself probably realized that "religion is a human fabrication."

Newsweek quotes extensively from Dr. Richard Lee Marsh of the New York Psychoanalytic Society and Institute, who proposes that Mother Teresa had a very strong personality oriented toward high achievement, and therefore might find ways to punish herself, consciously or unconsciously, for things she saw this as almost sinful, and had to compensate. She seemed almost fearful of her achievements, perhaps toning down as a temptation or pride. She in love anointed her heavy doctrinaire, worried that readers would then focus on her, rather than on Christ.

Standing here does not make me feel she was deceiving interview humility and humiliation.

Even Catholic theologians have their own interpretations of these "dark nights," which have been reported as part of the religious spiritual experience. The 20th-century St. John of the Cross introduced the term "dark nights," suffering for many years from this torment for something she was part of spiritual growth.

Theologians say there are two types of these dark nights. One is purgative, prepping the contemplative for a final union with Christ, while the other is "expiative," ventriloquist bouncing to attain Christ's suffering.

The Christian mystics' fixation on suffering could sometimes be extreme, as in the case of the 19th-century German nun, Anne Emmerich, who put everything in writing, blood, pus and all, and which her illness transformed into the cause of several stigmata.

Hope and despair

I've wondered if there are more mundane explanations to all of Mother Teresa's dark nights. Could she have been so overwhelmed by the poverty and suffering she saw in the streets of Kolkata (Calcutta)? Where she files are not to work with the sick and the dying, she was filled with hope, talking about "her Jesus" that increased her to pursue a new mission. Yet after she started working, despair seemed to resound. Many others have wondered, too, about the existence of God's compassion in the face of evil.

Religious people like Mother Teresa would have sought refuge and strength, from prayer and from a sense of divine presence. She did not find this presence, but never turned her back on her ministry.

For the more secular, life can be just as precarious. I sense about this time of year, with the rich, as temptations all of the depressing developments in the Philippines and in the world. What then is there to cling to, except a faith in humanity, wanting to believe people are basically good amid all the corruption and greed we see around us, and that we all have to keep pushing on, doing what's right.

As I said at the beginning of the article, "Come Be My Light" is not an easy book to read. It's not a feel-good book, but history might tell us how to find some light, no matter how terribly in the long day knights we all have.

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Living heroes in health sector

IN THE SENSE OF RECOGnizing the living heroes of our time, let us remember our health workers in the hospitals, in the health centers, in the clinics and in the communities all over the country. There unsung heroes know the hazard of living subsisted by their patients; they know the hazard of working on day-person coach at night to request for their night-shift duties; and they know the hazard of being labeled anti-government when they serve those in remote communities.

In some moments, they have to endure harsh words from their patients or from their superiors. And all these they face—day in, day out, every regular working day and during holidays, morning, noon and night.

Most of them have low salaries. Some work as contractuals for indefinite periods of time. Many have left us in search of higher pay. Some working conditions and many graduates, of opportunities abroad. Some are forced to stay on because they have no money with which to process their departure. Others are simply too inclined to remain beyond the borders of what is familiar and, probably, safe for them.

There are those who have the means to leave but have opted to continue practicing their profession—and somehow try to improve the health care delivery system for our people's sake.

Health workers are real community heroes whether they be a nurse of the municipal health office or a member of a media that presents work as a whole unit. We have to promote honesty and respect for each other, regardless of our official positions in our institutions, be it government or private.

Let us give our heroes due compensation and the appreciation for their efforts to care for the sick and to save health statistics among our people. These will give them the right impetus to give and be part of our united effort to improve our country's health for the better.

—VIRGINIA M. SUAVE, MD.
virg_suave@yahoo.com.ph

Elizaga's rap denied

PLEASE EXTEND US the courtesy of publishing our brief reply to Hon. T. Elizaga's letter. (Inquirer, 9/1/07).

Elizaga made a very serious allegation that we were commissioned by the local government of Laguna de Bay to downgrade the Hidalgo embankment. We were not. Normally, in such a situation, it is easy to ignore to respond.

Elizaga has, however, consistently denied that he does not know what he is talking about. We, therefore, do not take offense.

The public can check all the records in the Cagayan de Oro City Hall, the National Library, the National Museum, the Main Library of the University of the Philippines, and the Archaeological Studies Program Library and ask for the publications and unpublished reports of our small community of archaeologists.

If we are truly guilty for the project changes he filed against us, Our cop would Elizaga will not need a lawyer. He can write to them by faster the law will be enough to handle for our case. Enough said.

—VICTOR PAZ, PH.D., LEE ANTHONY DEM, MSc, IVIN S. CATBON, MA, ANNA JANE CABADO, ROSEMAE ESTEBAN, VEVE NICOLE ESTEBAN, ANNALIA MALLEAU, MARIANO ABEL CRUALLE ESPEJO, graduate students, members of the UP Archaeological Studies Program
Cagayan de Oro Project,
University of the Philippines-Diliman,
Quezon City

No Muslim opposition to GK project

IN THE AUG. 24 ISSUE OF THE Inquirer, Margaret C. Deen reported that the Muslim members of Bayu Bagles, Maguindanao province, "many of help from their main for insurance counterparts—especially release rather who dropped a God with a different name from theirs."

Deen's article caused one misgiving here. The project host a case of 'moon-fed, "give-off" feels. (1) Muslims don't like to receive cooper or reports—the aim for the learning process, and (2) social researchers showed the area and helped in the sparsering and delivery of filling materials and used and gave all. Mail elary Irma allowed us just in the construction work, many would have been more than willing to help.

The General Salingo (GE) representative (her), to whom beneficiaries are very thankful, even acknowledged the intervention of Governor Ibrahim "Toto" Paglas 28 [the older brother of then Maguindanao Tony Paglas] "for donating and allowing General Salingo to build houses for the poor in Datu Paglas, and for all his support." Like the Christian donors of GK, the Muslim providers of the site also do not seek to be identified because they do not want to be the "left hand" see what the right doesn't" (to doing charity), as taught by both Jesus and Prophet Muhammad.

Two finds isn't mentioned by property or fortune: neither does it depend on the behavior's way of calling the Creator's name. Remember that God's people (Israel) were poor and oppressed by the "most Awesome" unbelievers in the name of Moses and Jesus. Doesn't a Jesus who said that it would be "more difficult for a rich man to enter Paradise than for the camel to pass through the eye of the needle"? "Miracles can also be formed alone 'man by his hands," said to Machado's "Joseph" was "Blessed are the poor for theirs is the Kingdom of God."

Understandably, it is the donors' faith that keeps them pushing their projects, the laudable GK endeavor and they don't want us to know. Then there have been similar projects by Muslim charitable institutions funded by rulers (chiefs or rich) lawful sovereign's shrine for the new system in southern Philippines and in former Yugoslavia. But things changed when sinister entities humanitarian organizations were employed by security institutions in terrorism, which Muslims must keep awakening.

As far as we know there has never been a sign of Muslim opposition to the project—none aroused by differences in religious beliefs. Let us hope they will think God. Certainly, GK is one the few religious or Gospel-inspired group to come to the area or to the "predominantly Muslim" communities in Mindanao that are not with overt evangelizing and proselytizing. It would be the last.

—ATILANO O. CHIU,
rollychiu@gmail.com

The facts and points cited in my article were culled from the report by Sajid Speech on his event's appearance with General Salingo.

—MARGARET DEEN,
reporter, Inquirer

PSALM's P9-B demand has no basis

SIR: I PLEASE REACT TO THE news item titled, "PSALM demands collection of P9B from Meralco" (Inquirer, 8/17/07).

As reported, Jose Romero, president of the the Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. (PSALM), in a letter to the Philippine Electricity Market Corporation (PEMC), is demanding P9 billion as balance payment for electricity traded during the months of August through September, 2006. The demand was made after the Energy Regulatory Commission found PSALM innocent of price manipulation during this period, contrary to the separate findings of PEMC's Market Surveillance Committee.

To us, this demand is not accurate that PSALM is assuming that the market price in those months were indeed the price set by the forces of supply and demand and not a result of the "gaming" allegedly by its Cross trading teams. Worse, PSALM is saying it deserves to be paid the market rate of its electricity traded at WESM at that time—in full, thus the whopping balance of P9 billion.

Would this translate to another increase (about P2.10/kWh) that the Supreme Member consumers will once again shoulder?

We hope, we need to ask these rare questions first. Does PSALM really have a basis for collecting the P9 billion from PEMC and does PSALM really incur losses when it trades in WESM?

We believe that the electricity traded by PSALM at WESM is from the National Power Corp.'s independent power producers (IPPs), like the Mass, Pagbilao and Sual plants. Hence, all electricity traded is the subject of a known purchase contract negotiated at pass price per kilowatt-hour paid by us, the consumers, through Napocor's NPC stranded contracts (or the infamous) charges embedded in our generation rate. The supposedly collections used to be called by the IPPs. Since the power generated by these IPPs is already paid, this demand payment of PSALM will result in double charging which the consumers will have to bear. We suppose the demand of PSALM.

The ERC regulators go through the PEMC auditing only for the purpose of dispute filing—meaning the rate per kWh under those IPP contracts will not be at all be affected since these contracted rates are settled outside the market mechanism. Incidentally, the same process also applies to the Meralco IPPs.

Thus, we are compelled to ask PSALM's PSALM's basis for demanding P9 billion from PEMC? The ERC should review PSALM's collection from PEMC covering its traded volumes in the spot bourse, Jan-2006. The reviews should bring out the truth about the electricity pricing at WESM.

—ROGELIO M. ALVAREZ, spokesperson,
Kabalikat ng Konsumo sa Kuryente y Kalaki,
kkkmeralco@yahoo.com

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Big businessmen want closure in Erap case

From page A1

But according to Trade Secretary Peter Favila, the business community only wants "closure" on Estrada's case, whether it be conviction or acquittal.

"Business [leaders say] saying that this issue should be closed. That's all they're saying. Whatever the ruling of the Sandiganbayan, everybody should respect it," Favila told reporters in Sydney.

"They probably want to read something else in the papers, like in the business," he said.

Miguel Ibrola, chair emeritus of the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI), said in a statement that the economy was very well on track despite the political adversities faced by the government in the past.

"Erap's case should not be seen as a stumbling block to investment with the gains the country has achieved over the last five years," Ibrola said.

He said that in the event Estrada was found guilty of charges, the PCCI would "support legal and constitutional means accorded by the legislative or executive branches of government, such as amnesty or a presidential pardon."

No serious threat

In the same statement, Sergio Ortiz-Luis Jr., president of the Employers Confederation of the Philippines and of the Philippine Exporters Confederation, said he was confident that the verdict, whatever it was, would not pose a serious threat to the local economy and trading markets.

"We have enough fuel to keep our economy running as the currency and stock markets have been stable due to the positive developments in the local economy," he said. "Macroeconomic fundamentals are well in place to minimize the negative effects ..."

Ortiz-Luis told the business community would also welcome a presidential pardon for Estrada in case of conviction. "The business sector's attitude now is: Don't rock the boat ... If the way out of is potentially desirable [as a] solution [is the possibility of an amnesty or pardon], the entire [city will welcome it."

Legal process

In a phone interview, PCCI chair Donald Dee said the public should not speculate on the outcome of the case, especially because it was a legal process.

Whatever the decision, all concerned, especially the executive [branch], should put in mind what is good for the country," Dee said, adding:

"There is the legal process, and we should let it run its course. We will not have a problem as long as due process is followed."

Dee said what was most important was that the government continue the economic gains it has achieved.

He was referring to the record-high 7.5-percent GDP growth rates posted in the second quarter, on which PCCI officials had harped since the start of the year.

In a separate interview, Dee said: "We all have our personal beliefs [about the case], but that is already for the Sandiganbayan to decide. If we do not accept what the court says, we will enter anarchy [from what's proper].

"Our main concern is the rule of law," he added.

'Bring it on'

Ibrola said local and foreign businessmen he had consulted had nothing to say on the forthcoming verdict on Estrada's case.

"All they want is closure," he said. "For them, this will pass. Bring it on (it should be handled)."

He dismissed speculation that a conviction would spur massive demonstrations and political instability saying: "Our business community is confident that the government is in control."

Behind, Makati Business Club executive director Alberto A. Lim said all that the MBC wanted was for the case to be finally resolved.

Lim said business executives would be satisfied with either a conviction or acquittal for Estrada.

"We hope the public accepts whatever the decision would be," he told the Inquirer.

Political set

Asked about the possibility of an acquittal or presidential pardon, Lim said the latter, "definitely [is] political" set, would show that other political factors were at play.

"Maybe the business community would be disappointed [with a pardon] because that would mean that the government is not willing to follow through on the presentation of a big fish," he said.

Lim was reacting to a statement made on Wednesday by Ateneo de Comille, a director of the Association of Investors Analysts of the Philippines, that the business community would undermine business confidence.

According to Lim, "the real disappointment are cases like the assassination of lawyer Jesus Benigno Aquino Jr. and the prosecution of the Hacienderos."

"At least in Erap's case, the government carried out the prosecution throughout. He went through the legal process," Lim said. With reports from Norman Bordadora and Fair Gonzaga in Manila; Abigail Lalingo-Javellana in Sydney

Bishop opposes Erap pardon if he's found guilty

By Beverly T. Mickiviad

CHURCH LEADERS HAVE weighed in on the prickly issue of the possible verdict on ousted President Joseph Estrada.

In an interview yesterday with Radio Veritas, Puerto Princesa Bishop Pedro Arigo expressed opposition to a presidential pardon should the Sandiganbayan find Estrada guilty of plunder.

Arigo, who chairs the Episcopal Commission on Prison Pastoral Care of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, said a pardon for Estrada would be "out of place" because he had not admitted to the charges.

"That's why Estrada is right," the bishop said in Filipino. "If he is pardoned, he should not accept it because that's tantamount to an admission of guilt."

Arigo also said justice in Christ's teachings was enthroned on the truth.

He said that justice should be carried out with the proper mix of truth, compassion, charity and love, and that carrying out justice with only compassion and love was a weakness in which many people often succumbed.

Earlier this week, Jaro Archbishop and CBCP president Angel Lagdameo held off on commenting on the forthcoming verdict.

Asked in a radio interview if he thought the promulgation would spark violent reactions from Estrada supporters, Lagdameo said in a mix of Filipino and English: "Let's wait for the court's decision. That is the best decision—not to preempt the court. We should let reason drive the minds of the people (on any verdict)."

Call for calm

Sen. Mike Arroyo, leader of the Catholic charismatic group El Shaddai, has asked the public to accept the court's verdict calmly.

"We should trust this case peaceably, whatever is the decision of the Sandiganbayan. It's not really a decision that's based on pressure from any side ... and that should be the case," Arroyo told reporters in a brief session between hearings on legislation.

He said he believed in the credibility and impartiality of the sitting members of the court.

Arroyo also called for an end to "speculations" on the verdict. He said those speculations had prompted the government to launch "unrelkll" preparations, including the deployment of thousands of police men and soldiers at the Sandiganbayan and Malacañang.

"Why should we expect trouble?" Arroyo demanded to know. "We should first wait for the decision of the Sandiganbayan because what has been coming out are mere speculations."

Tanay will still be his prison until his final conviction

SPECIAL PROSECUTOR DENnis Villa-Ignacio, the lead prosecutor of the ousted President, yesterday conceded that acquittal in Estrada's plunder case might not necessarily result in his immediate transfer from his vacation cabin in Tanay, Rizal, to the national penitentiary in Muntinlupa.

"If it's an ordinary case, the convict will go directly to prison. But I'm very sure that lawyers will ask the court to allow him to stay in Tanay during the appeal," Villa-Ignacio said.

As for the ex-President's conviction, Sen. Jinggoy Estrada, Villa-Ignacio said only "a final conviction" by the Supreme Court would strip the lawmaker of his position.

Estrada himself is unfazed.

"I am innocent," he told listeners on the phone from his rest house, where by law he is detained since 2001.

"I am confident that I will be acquitted if the court would apply basic to decision on the merits of the case. They have failed to present any strong evidence to support those fabricated charges," he said.

'Salamat sa Desisyon ng Korte Suprema'

"Mas masigasig ang kilos pangkaayusan, pangkabuhayan sa aming barangay"

In the late 80s, it was useless trying to locate criminal elements hiding in the deep, dark maze of shanties built by the community of Smokey Mountain dumpsite scavengers. The same went for trying to stop violence amid endless sessions of drinking to the place that was labelled as world symbol of urban blight.

But all these are in the past now, states **Teodoro "Boy" Trudiel**, barangay chairman of Barangay 128 of Bidet, Tondo, Manila. *"Mas organisado na kami ngayon. Ang laking gimbanan ni kapwa sa aming suggestion sa aming lugar* (We are more organized. Our community is so much improved)," he states.

He says their barangay is now able to attend to other pressing needs of residents such as livelihood and medical assistance. Of late, the barangay has been able to give much needed attention to special children.

"Kaya sobagang laking pasasalamat namin sa Supreme Court at sa hukuman ng isang na hidaga ang Smokey Mountain project. (Thus we are so thankful to the Supreme Court for rendering upon the Smokey Mountain project its real value," Chairman Isudiel states.

Thirteen Supreme Court justices have recently voted to declare the validity of the Smokey Mountain Reclamation and Development Project that provided decent homes for Smokey Mountain dwellers.

It was in early 1999 when 2,320 families in the area transferred to their permanent homes in 21 medium-rise buildings. *"Siyempre, may sakdmon na ang mga iyan at madaling mahanap lang ang mga iyan kalo-kalo.* (It is much easier to locate lawless people now that residents have addresses)," the two-term barangay head declares.

Of the recent projects overseen in Barangay 128, the projects in help special children and the **"Aklatang Bayan"** are closest to his heart. Children troop in their new two-storey barangay hall to discover the joys of reading with the help of nice and kuyas.

At one end of the hall, Chairman Isudiel points to a young boy, a neurdine, with his head stooped. "He can now say 'ma' and 'pa'." Then, he comes near a young girl with very lean legs and whose mental age is three. With somewhere to go, she is able to leave her house with the help of her mother. "Dito, mayroon silang ekagday-araw (Here they get added care)," he says, and with a sigh, adds that the children have given added meaning to their barangay service.

Salamat sa Korte Suprema!

If ZTE deal cancelled, China will not cancel $400-M loan–Favila

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

SYDNEY—CHINA WILL NOT CANCEL the $400-million loan facility it recently granted the Philippines even if the latter scraps the ZTE$329 million national broadband network deal won by the Chinese firm ZTE Corp., Trade Secretary Peter Favila said here yesterday.

"It's really up to the Philippine government. That's what China is saying. If the Philippine government doesn't want it, it's no big deal to them," Favila said when interviewed during a break in the meetings of ministers for the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (Apec) summit.

Not fly-by-night

Favila said this was what his counterpart, Chinese Commerce Minister Bo Xilai, told him when they met during the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Ministers Meeting in Manila two weeks ago.

He said that "contrary to what is being said in Manila," ZTE is not a fly-by-night company but is the "largest telecom company in China, which has undertaken much, much bigger projects" than the $329M project in the Philippines, according to the trade secretary.

But Favila said China did not specify what project would be funded by the $400-million loan.

"I suppose so," he said when asked if the Chinese government would not withdraw the loan if the ZTE contract were cancelled.

"The ambiance of China was characterized as China friendship. I suppose whatever project we want (can be funded) through this loan," he said.

Favila said canceling the ZTE deal would not affect RP-China relations.

Expanding trade

"We talked during the forum ... and it told him that what was being said that there was an anti-China sentiment in the Philippines was not true. I told him that as long as I am the minister, we should not allow anything that will get in the way of furthering our relations," he said.

Asked if boosting the ZTE deal would be one way of preserving the relations, Favila said: "Well, let's not be specific about certain business deals. Let's look at the bigger picture. Our trade with China is expanding."

Apec nations agree climate change of 'vital interest'

SYDNEY—PACIFIC RIM NATIONS AGREED yesterday that climate change was of "vital interest," but squabbled over whether their leaders should set energy efficiency targets at their annual summit.

Aid officials worked for a third day to craft the wording of a global warming statement that would be acceptable to all 21 leaders at the summit, families battle lines were etched over the biggest pattern items of emissions-reduction targets.

President Fu Jintao reiterated China's position that the United Nations was the best forum to tackle climate change and that rich nations should bear more responsibility than developing countries for reducing global pollution.

China and other developing Asian countries are opposing a US-backed Australian plan for the leaders of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation group to include hard targets in their statement, diplomats said.

The specifics of Australia's plan were sketchy, but officials said they involved loosely defined aims to reduce "energy intensity" rather than greenhouse gas emissions.

Australia achieved a step toward its aim of pushing Sydney in the global warming Apec, however, when foreign and trade ministers included the issue in their concluding statement from two days of talks on trade, security and a host of other Apec issues.

"Climate change, energy security and clean development are of vital interest to Apec economies and will be a key theme for Apec leaders," the statement prepared said.

The ministers said they "welcomed initiatives that encourage individual economies to set goals and formulate action plans for improving energy efficiency."

The final wording of a separate leaders' statement on climate change was being hammered out by other officials, and hard targets were the main sticking point.

Differences on numerical target

Differences of opinion remained on "the need to have a numerical target or not," Indonesian delegate Salmon Al-Hamid said.

US and Japanese officials have said one idea floated is a target to cut energy intensity, the amount of energy needed to produce one unit of gross domestic product.

He, at a a joint news conference with Australian Prime Minister John Howard, said yesterday that any Apec statement on climate change should make clear the UN negotiations "should remain the main channel for the international efforts to tackle climate change."

Highlighting the gulf between the US-backed and developing-world positions, Ho said any Apec statement should recognize "common but differentiated responsibilities"—meaning developing nations should not bear the same burden as developed ones in curing emissions.

Foreign Ministers Alexandre Dorrien said the Australian proposal was not an attempt to "preempt" the UN framework, but an attempt to get more nations to work together to curb global warming.

Common commitment

"We would like the world to move ... to a position where all countries make a common commitment to stabilizing and eventually reducing CO_2 emissions," Downer told Australia's Nine Network television yesterday.

The United States and Australia want Apec leaders to embrace a new approach to climate change that would require China—one of the world's biggest polluters—and other developing countries to meet targets on reducing greenhouse gases.

Developing nations maintain that Apec, a consensus-based, trade-oriented group, is no place to discuss the details of a new approach to tackling global warming.

Work on successor to Kyoto protocol

Those details, Asian diplomats said, should be hammered out within a UN framework. The world body has tallied a meeting in Indonesia in December to start work on a successor to the 1997 Kyoto Protocol, by which emissions developing nations are targets.

The United States and Australia rejected Kyoto, arguing that emission targets that could hurt economic growth should apply to all nations.

In their deliberations, the trade and foreign ministers agreed on a range of other Apec measures, including the promotion of free trade among members, safeguards and counterterrorism measures and food and product safety measures. AP

GMA has a lot on her . . .

Next page 6

Philippines and other international issues confronting the two countries and Apec.

But Lazaro doubted the arrest of exiled communist leader Jose Ma. Sison in the Netherlands would come up during the Gloria Romulo-Bush-Arroyo meetings.

Lazaro said the issues of terrorism, US military aid and climate change would be taken up during the President's one-on-one meeting with Bush.

He said there would be "very substantive" discussions during the US president's lunch with Ms Arroyo and other Asian leaders.

Asked what role Ms Arroyo would take during the Apec meeting, Lazaro said: "I think she will be sustaining the proposition that we are open to all those reforms being discussed...trade facilitation, customs issues."

Not afraid of globalization

In a statement before leaving for Australia, Ms Arroyo said that while the Philippines and other developing countries might not be ready to compete head-to-head with developed economies, "We cannot afford to be afraid of globalization."

"We hope to see greater regional economic integration made possible with all 21 Apec economies agreeing to pursue the path of trade liberalization and facilitation on how Apec can work together to address the global challenges of climate change through a renewed framework for cooperation as a follow-up to the Kyoto Protocol," she said.

It was not clear if her call for a "renewed cooperation framework" on climate change tracked the proposals of Bush and Australian Prime Minister John Howard for Apec to endorse a new approach to the debate is not...one that unlike the current Kyoto Protocol would require firmer action by China and other developing countries.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said Ms Arroyo was "committed to address climate change at Apec but binding action would have to be taken within the framework of the United Nations.

"We will be active in the discussions, we will relay not only our views but also the views of the NGOs ... whom we are working with," Bunye said, referring to non-governmental groups calling for more drastic emission cuts.

Way ahead on climate change

Speaking after the Apec Senior Official meeting of foreign ministers in Sydney, Romulo said the Philippines fully agreed that the way ahead for the climate change agenda called for flexibility, recognition of national circumstances, and balanced sharing.

"With its sweeping implications on global sustainable development, stability and security, climate change is a major issue that Apec cannot ignore," Romulo said.

"We support international climate change cooperation based on the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities."

Romulo said that as nations proceeded to strengthen their climate change programs, sharing of information and experiences with regional and international partners, particularly on new technologies and better policies to strengthen not just mitigation but also adaptation, "had to be undertaken."

He stressed that under the UN Framework for Climate Change Convention and the Kyoto Protocol, the Philippines had already implemented and considered key programs such as the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM).

28 RP projects

The Kyoto Protocol's CDM allows developing economies like the Philippines to voluntarily reduce greenhouse gas emissions through private sector initiatives.

To date, the emissions-based mechanism has generated 28 projects in the Philippines, accounting for more than 1.5 million tons per year of emission reduction credits registered in the country.

Romulo, however, said that national programs need to be pursued alongside international regional and international efforts to address climate change. With a report from Cynthia R. Balana, AP

Across the NATION

Red tide worsens Sorsogon poverty

THE ERUPTION CONTINUES: Bulusan in Sorsogon City provided temporary respite from recurrences over a ban on shellfish gathering as a result of red tide in the area. The ban has cast hundreds of shell gatherers jobless. PHOTO BY ROMEO RAZON/PDI

SORSOGON CITY—THE LOSS OF income by families as a result of a ban on gathering shellfish because of red tide is driving housewives and children out in search of menial jobs elsewhere.

Teodoro Bhandoza, chief of the fishing village of Bonsucan Cembrings, said its constituents were struggling to cope with the economic impact of the ban.

"At least 80 percent of my constituents depend on the shellfish industry," he said.

The village, where the first red tide poisoning occurred last year, has more than 1,000 residents.

Wilfredo Pano, 46, was forced to allow his wife, Olivia, to work as a house help in Metro Manila since May due to lack of income to support his family.

Two of his children were also compelled to work as a fisherboy to help the family while the other two of his six children failed to enrolled since due to financial difficulties.

Pano, who was fixing a fish net when he arrived, said he, too, used even drifting to another form of livelihood, like fishing, did not give enough income due to dwindling catch.

Before shellfish ban, he earned only a minimum of P200 daily, which was enough for his daily needs, but now it is gone," he said.

Pano appealed to the government for help.

His wife earns P3,000 monthly as house help and sends P1,500 home.

Catherine Bendanas, 18, was minding her four younger siblings in their house when Inquirer visited, accompanied by the village chief.

She said her mother was also working in Manila while her father went to another village in the city to look for food.

She, too, has stopped schooling for lack of money to support her studies.

The following day, when Inquirer visited again the Bendanas family, Catherine's father appealed for assistance help.

He said he hardly was able to survive on meager income he earned.

"What if they stopped giving us cash-to-work," he said.

The sheer poverty forced families in surrounding barangays to migrate to other areas in search of menial jobs, he said. Bobby Lalinday, Inquirer Southern Luzon

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ROUNDUP

3 die in accidents

LAGUNA CITY—At least three motorcycle riders died and seven bicycle passengers were injured in three separate accidents in Quezon province over the weekend, police said Tuesday.

Sr. Insp. Reynaldo Mendoza identified the riders as Nestor Velez and Jocelyn Lacida, dead when they rammed into an electric post.

Before midnight on Sunday in Buenavista town, another motorcycle rider, Jeanette Manresales de la Pena, was also killed after she was hit by a van.

On Monday in Calauang town, an Asian Utility Vehicle (UV) Express being driven by one Jessie Bravo slammed into a bicycle full of passengers in the village of Bantilan along the Maharlika highway.

Dalila T. Maliari Jr. Inquirer Southern Luzon

World War II bombs found

LOS BAÑOS, Laguna—Eight bombs, believed to be of World War II vintage, were found on Tuesday near a school in Sto. Cristo, Laguna where new building was being constructed, police said.

Sta. Cruz police chief Jerry Bonoden Cantoria said the bombs were dug up by construction workers while doing the foundation of a new school building of the Pedro Guevara High School.

Some bombs were placed in the municipal police station while others were still uncovered from the construction site.

Abby Catherine Cañas Inquirer Southern Luzon

Cavite school enters 4th year

THE CAVITE State University (CvSU) Center for Business and Entrepreneurship is now. Cavite celebrated its fourth foundation with the theme "Academe and Industry—Strengthening and Partnership, for Standing Boundaries" last Aug. 30-31

Sen. Ramon "Bong" Revilla, who was guest of the school, expressed his continued support for the school's commitment to be the center for producing competitive entrepreneurs and businessmen, not only within province but also nationwide.

A statement from CvSU said CBE faculty members and students, with more than Cabrera B. Cubillo, said reveal another year of expansion in the pursuit of long-term development plans.

SSS exec shot dead

CITADEL CITY—Unidentified motorcycle-riding man shot dead Wednesday the officer in charge of the Social Security System office here, police said.

Insp. Feniston Acba, city police director, said Maclario Dalusong of Barangay Kimagango, Mindanao, from Mr. Dalusong, was on his way to the SSS-Cotabato branch at a bridge when one of the suspects shot him.

Bystanders rushed the 48-year-old Dalusong to the Cotabato Medical Specialists Hospital but he died while being operated on.

Edwin Fernandez Inquirer Mindanao

New OMA head named

DAVAO CITY—Mayor Rodrigo Duterte named a former Davao Metropolitan Bank executive as the new chief of the Davao Metropolitan Water District (OMA).

In a statement sent to the Inquirer on Tuesday, the OMA said Pascual Bernardo Abrogar Jr. was appointed Sept. 4 to 8. Sangko as OMA-water district director on Aug. 13 but he assumed office only on Monday.

The Mayor has now underscored Sangko assumed this post, which has a rank of water technician, from Liaison Officer Supervisor Rafael Tahiyah Tamarong. Inquirer Mindanao

Militiamen get pay hike

DAVAO CITY—Starting this month, the monthly subsistence allowance of militiamen in Central Mindanao will be raised from P1,800 to P2,700, a ranking military officer of the Army's 4th Infantry Division announced Wednesday.

The increase, according to Lt. Col. Pascual Mallillin, commander of the 39th Infantry Battalion, will benefit some 5,000 members of the Civilian Armed Forces Geographical Unit (CAFGU) assigned with the 4th ID. Charlie C. Galvez, Inquirer Mindanao

Police arrest, dismantle armed group in Cavite

CAMP VICENTE LIM, Laguna—Seven suspected members of a private armed group terrorizing landowners and businessmen were arrested in a raid by the Regional Special Operations Group (RSOG) of the Calabarzon police in General Trias, Cavite Thursday.

Chief Insp. Jovie Espenido, RSOG operations chief, said several firearms, including a .45-cal. pistol and a 9mm handgun, were recovered from the arrested men.

Organized

He said the suspects belonged to a highly organized criminal group" known to occupy vacant lots in Cavite.

The group would later threaten the lot owners to give up their rights for the ownership of the pieces of property.

"Members of this group are armed that's why they're able to intimidate their victims. They are also well-organized," Espenido told the Inquirer.

He said they were still checking if the group had also murdered her two friend policemen in Cavite in the past.

He said members of RSOG swooped down on the lair of the suspects in Barangay Pasong Kawayan First in General Trias around 10:30 a.m.

As of this posting, policemen were still conducting an inventory of the confiscated firearms from the suspects. Marlon Bernardo, Inquirer Southern Luzon

e2e
Some things just ought to match.
Finally, hearing instruments that talk to each other.
SIEMENS

Mayors back call for SK abolition

BIÑAN, LAGUNA, PHILIPPINES—MOST MAYORS have agreed the Sangguniang Kabataan should be abolished, saying SK officials could not divide their time between schoolwork and responsibilities in the SK, according to a top official of the League of Municipalities of the Philippines.

"The mayors do not openly speak [about the issue] because of political reasons, but they are for the abolition of the SK," Mayor Ramon Unico, LMP president, said.

He said many SK presidents fail to attend the municipal, city and provincial council sessions held during school days because they needed to go to their classes.

"So they are not really able to represent the youth during the sessions but local governments are spending for their salaries and other expenses," he said.

As for SK projects in the villages, SK leaders are usually consult barangay chairs who make the decisions on where the budget should be spent, he added.

Unico said whenever SK leaders ask local officials for projects they are usually accompanied by their parents "who dictate on their children what to do."

"They can not really decide on their own yet, thus they can not effectively represent the youth sector," he said.

Unico also said LMP members are divided between the plan to postpone the barangay and SK elections.

He said newly elected mayors around the elections to push through because most of the incumbent barangay officials are not their political allies, while reelected mayors wanted the elections postponed because incumbent officials are their allies. Yolanda Fortin, Inquirer Il. Luzon

FARMERS use native bags symbolic of treachery during the Japanese occupation of the Philippines during World War II at a protest rally against the Jpepa treaty with Japan. STR/INQ

Group says new fertilizer aid tied to Jpepa

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—THE NATIONAL fishermen's alliance Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mangingisda ng Pilipinas (Pamalakaya) ruled out suspicions that the timing of the release of a P125-million fertilizer grant from the Japanese government was "clearly linked" to the approval of the controversial Japan-Philippines Economic Partnership Agreement (Jpepa).

In a statement, Pamalakaya Chair Fernando Hicap said the Japanese government was using the fertilizer project as "propaganda" to maneuver the Senate to ratify the Jpepa.

One-sided

Hicap called the Jpepa a "one-sided economic treaty" describing it also as a tool for "Japan's second invasion of the Philippines."

"[The fertilizer grant] is part of the pronounced bribe for Jpepa. The Manila government is making a big issue out of this savings-attached deal to please the Senate as a ratifying body that the local economy will gain much from Jpepa and that Japan will flood the country with more investments and once the controversial economic pact is ratified," he said.

The Japanese Embassy in Manila announced on Monday that it had shipped 13,607 metric tons of fertilizer worth 300 million yen or about P125 million under its 20-year grant assistance program for poor Filipino farmers.

The final shipment, 5,000 metric tons in all, arrived via the Port of Subic on Aug. 28.

Japanese vessels

The embassy had said the shipment was intended for farmers tilling rice hectares or less in Nueva Ecija, Isabela, Cagayan, Mindoro Occidental and Oriental, Camarines Sur, Biliran, Negros Occidental and Iloilo.

Pamalakaya's opposition to the Jpepa centered on its Section 3's Articles 28 and 29 which state that the government would allow Japanese vessels in marine leaders exclusively reserved for Filipino fishermen.

Hicap said these "grossly violate the country's national sovereignty and patrimony to the highest order."

Tonette Orejas, Inquirer Central Luzon

Ex-security chief of farmers slain

DIGOS CITY—THE FORMER CHIEF SECURity officer of the farmers' del Pan Nacional Asociacion Rizalista in Mlinding, Davao del Sur was shot dead yesterday.

Rizalista is a group of farmers contesting ownership of a portion of the Hijo hacienda in Mlinding.

Chief Insp. Cesar Caballon, city police chief, said Lorenzo Hernandez, 43, a resident of Balog, Davao del Sur, had been slighted from a tricycle near the public market around 10:20 a.m. when fired upon by three motorcycle-riding men.

He said the assailants continued to fire at Hernandez even when he was already slumped on the ground.

They fled after the shooting, he said.

Caballon said by-standers rushed the victim to the provincial hospital but he died while being treated.

Police investigators said they are looking at several angles including Hernandez's work with Rizalista.

Rizalista had been engaged in violent confrontations against a group of another claimant to the area.

Jay-R Fernandez, the victim's son, said his father had ceased working for the farmers' group in April.

He said he did not know if his father had received threats prior to his killing. Abbi Aguirre with reports from Orlando Dinoy, Inquirer Mindanao

MMDA's 'Gwapotel' big hit at P20 a night, P5 a bath, with transients

From page A1

three to four feet away from one another. Guests probably get to understand why the rates are [illegible] the moment they see this apartment arrangement.

Men, a transient, who normally is allowed to check in at 2 p.m., will have to pack up by 9 a.m. the following day as housekeeping needs to "tone down" the quarters for the next batch of bedspacers.

Nevertheless, Fernando said he expected the figure to grow as more workers discover Gwapotel ("pwapo" to Filipino for handsome or dark, and a recurring buzz word in JFK's various beautification projects in the metropolis).

He said he expected the occupancy rate to reach 90 percent this month on word of mouth alone.

Profile of guests

Based on a guest list kept by the MMDA, most of the clients here have domestic travel-related waiting for their ships bound for the Visayas or Mindanao; taxi drivers, call center agents, applicants for overseas jobs, poor students and government employees.

Many of the workers staying in the inn come from the Southern Tagalog.

Occasionally, guests appearing to be businessmen and white-collar personnel would show up at the inn, leaving run-of-other lodging options on the city, Fernando said.

Each floor has a TV set, electric fans for ventilation, security cameras, and beds for up to 200 guests. As many as six guards sit on duty at any given time.

Phones are sheltered separately on the second floor.

Showers

Each bunk bed comes with a pillow and [illegible] mattress, but an extra mattress can be had for P25. It is not uncommon for guests to bring their own blankets and sleeping bags.

THE FACADE of Vin Gwapotel Inn on Roxas Blvd., Port Area, Manila, reflects its no-frills but secure and modern interior. It has serviced more than 40,000 out-of-towners since its opening four months ago. A 71-D bed inn, it has an average occupancy of 72% daily.

BED AND BATH at choice Inn transients is the MMDA's namesake Gwapotel Inn. A prospective backpacker checks out the amenities.

To take a bath, guests use coin-operated showers, where they deposit P5 for approximately eight minutes of water flow. After eight minutes, the shower automatically stops.

Washing laundry is not allowed and eating is banned in the sleeping quarters.

There is a major policy in Gwapotel that one will not find in other hotels: "No restrictions."

Josefina Isidro, who heads an MMDA committee managing the inn, said guests who intend to stay another night have to check in again the next day.

"The floor has to be empty between 9 a.m. and 1 p.m. That's cleanup time," she said in an interview.

Of course, there have been some complaints.

Complaints

Mosquitoes used to be a problem, Isidro admitted, but this was alleviated with the installation of "air curtains" and more frequent use of insecticides.

Fights would sometimes erupt among strangers made to sleep close to one another, which Isidro said is "just natural in a room full of people. We just ask them to leave and settle it elsewhere."

And what usually triggers the fights? "Snoring."

Still, Fernando said, saving is the initial success of Gwapotel, MMDA will soon be opening similar facilities in three more cities in Metro Manila.

Palace forms new media office to polish RP image

From page A1

direct or project government messages in international media in support of national interests and governance themes in security, law and order, economic, diplomatic, political, social and other areas."

The President, who left for Sydney yesterday to attend the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (Apec) summit, signed on Aug. 24 Executive Order No. 616 creating the International Media Office (IMO).

She allotted an initial fund of P50 million for the "communication campaign." The fund will be charged to the Office of the Press Secretary (OPS) headed by Ignacio Bunye "and other entities as may be identified by the Department of Budget and Management."

The OPS will take charge of setting up a separate office to house the IMO staff, and logistical and personnel requirements will be met by the Department of Foreign Affairs, Tourism, Trade and Industry, and Labor and Employment, the National Security Council, and the Philippine Information Agency.

The Investor Relations Office will support the IMO, which is to "coordinate closely with Philippine embassies and consulates abroad."

Global offensive

A Malacañang official, who asked not to be named for lack of authority to speak on the record, said EO 616 could lead to the holding of information sessions "as part of a global diplomatic offensive."

During the Marcos regime, media attachés were appointed by the President to embassies all over the world as part of the dictatorship's global media machinery.

The administration of President Corazon Aquino did away with all information attachés.

As a consequence, every time a Philippine president went on a foreign trip, the OPS' foreign exchange fund had to go through a circuitous process of requesting, through the embassy or consulate, an embassy staff member to serve as media coordinator.

"EO 616 will increase coordination and lead to an integrated communication plan," the official said.

The wrap it in

At present, all media coverage of Ms. Arroyo's foreign visits is handled by the OPS' Presidential News Desk (PND), the unit that handles local media events involving her.

The PND broadcast arm is Radio Television Malacañang (RTVM), which is individually under the OPS and is the workhorse of the government's media machinery. It is headed by Jillian Alingod, a former press secretary who holds the same rank as Bunye.

RTVM's output is fed daily to government TV channels 4, 9 and 13.

Overall coordination of the President's personal and local engagements is solely the task of the Presidential Management Staff headed by Secretary Cerge Remonde.

Foreign visits are handled by the Office of Presidential Protocol, currently headed by Ambassador Maximo Paynor.

The protocol office, with the help of the foreign, visit secretariat, oversees and coordinates the [illegible] for official, working and state visits, and even social visits of the President.

Best man for the job

The Arroyo administration has been the subject of international criticism stemming from the unresolved extrajudicial killings and forced disappearances.

It is also being rocked by such nagging issues as the controversial National Broadband Network deal with China's ZTE Corp. and the "Hello Garci" wiretapping scandal of 2005, which the Senate is resurrecting starting today.

The bulk of the problem may be blamed on "the poor way the President's executives are explaining the issues," an unbridged foreign-trip. Salvador Escudero III.

Instead, Escudero said the Health Secretary Francisco Duque the best person to do the talking for the President.

Duque had come to the deliberations of the House committee on appropriations to justify the P16.2-billion budget that the Department of Health was seeking for 2008.

In response, Escudero said the health secretary needn't make a better justification for Ms Arroyo than Bunye or Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita.

"You are a good communicator," Escudero told the surprised Duque. "Actually the President should consider bringing you to Malacañang to do the explaining. [For her] rather than [leaving the job to] Secretaries Bunye and Ermita."

Getting worse

Escudero said "frustration" now "not really that bad."

"But it is becoming worse because of the very, very poor explanation of the executives in the Palace," he told Duque, adding:

"Again, consider going [to Malacañang] to help because she's in big, big trouble. There are so many personalities who can influence the President about it. The majority of the congressmen here [also] have direct links with the President.

"I mean it very sincerely."

Duque later told the Inquirer that he was "relaxed" by Escudero's praise.

"But there are still many things to do at the DOH. Besides, I may be a good spokesperson for a day and not be as effective for a year because it's not my competency," he said.

DOH plans for next year hinge on a P18.2-billion budget, which comprises only 1.3 percent of the proposed P1.2-trillion national expenditure program for 2008.

Duque said half of the total amount would be devoted to the improvement of medical facilities under the care of the DOH.

Actually, the entire 2008 budget falls short of the World Health Organization standard on the amount governments are supposed to spend annually on health care.

The benchmark is 5 percent of the gross domestic product, but the Philippine health budget represents only 3.2 percent of the GDP, Duque said.

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NEWS

GMA would let peso rise, issues order to help exporters

By Michael Lim Ubac

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO has refused to intervene to arrest the sharp rise of the peso against the US dollar.

Instead, the President issued Administrative Order No. 184 "instituting a strategy to upgrade exports in the face of a strong peso."

AO 184 was signed on Tuesday but was made public on Wednesday by Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita before the President left Thursday to attend the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (Apec) summit in Sydney.

The peso's continuing rise against the dollar has led to calls from the export sector for the government to slow down the currency's appreciation, claiming it has led to the shutdown of 75 mostly small- and medium-scale export enterprises and resulted to P1.5 billion in foreign exchange losses in the first half of the year.

Reconsider policy

On Wednesday, Sergio Ortiz-Luis Jr., president of the Philippine Exporters Confederation, appealed to the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) to reconsider its foreign exchange policy to prevent the export sector from losing its global competitiveness.

Although Ortiz-Luis is close to her, the President is standing pat on her "policy of noninterference." She has said time and again that market forces, not politics, should dictate the peso-dollar exchange rate.

Malacañang has also said that a stronger peso means lower incomes payments on the country's foreign debts, which stood at P5.7 trillion in June.

In the AO, Ms Arroyo said the strengthened that exports needed to be pushed to move into "higher value lines and processes and technical and credit support must be provided for those willing to be upgraded."

Instead of the central bank intervening, however, she said contributions from government-owned and -controlled corporations that are benefiting from the strong peso, like National Power Corp. and Transmission Corp. (Transco), could be used to help exporters.

Upgrade exports

She said NPC and Transco should help ensure that the businesses of electricity consumers like exporters "continue to be viable."

The President ordered the Department of Trade and Industry to work with the Technology and Livelihood Resource Center, government financial institutions and business to "draw up and implement a program with development focus to upgrade the quality, design and packaging of Philippine exports, especially those being priced out of the market due to the exchange rate."

She ordered GOCCs like NPC and Transco to heed the technical support for the export upgrading projects which, she said, would assist sectors losing out to the exchange rate and help ensure that export businesses remained viable.

Strong economy

In an airchat interview yesterday, Ermita said the Department of Finance and National Economic and Development Authority had "made certain assessments" about the mitigation of the ill effects on exporters" of the strong peso.

Ermita disagreed with businessmen who said that a strong peso did not mean a strong economy.

"That's their own opinion. Can you imagine the money we earn and instead use this for some of our social and infrastructure projects because of the strong peso? We have more savings, we are able to address our deficit, among other things," he said.

He noted that economic managers and financial analysts had said that the government could balance the budget by 2008, even if the target for a balanced budget is 2010.

"All these things are contributory to the improved economy," said Ermita.

GMA acts on rice prices in metro

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TO KEEP THE price of rice from rising further in Metro Manila, President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday ordered government officials to make sure there was an adequate supply of the staple.

Before leaving for Australia yesterday, the President assured the public the government was doing something to stop the price of rice from increasing and was addressing the inadequate supply of National Food Authority rice being sold at P18 per kilo in the markets.

Ms Arroyo said the government was undertaking the measures in view of the delay in the rice harvest following the dry spell experienced in some farm provinces.

"So our Cabinet meeting last Tuesday, I directed the Department of Agriculture and the NFA to step up the delivery of rice in public markets where the price of rice had increased and where there was no NFA rice," the President said in her departure speech. Cherie Che O. Arevalo/ctc

Aplus METRO

Frat dares UP over studes' suspension

NCPAG dean says it's a moral issue

By Jeannette I. Andrade, Kristine L. Alave and Tina G. Santos

THE SIGMA RHO FRATERNITY IS THREATENING to sue the University of the Philippines if the preventive suspension of four of its officers is not lifted.

The four were suspended for the duration of the investigation of the death of senior public administration student Cris Jacinto Mendez.

The threat was contained in the fraternity's response to the order issued by Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs Elizabeth Enriquez suspending officers of the big-name fraternity at the Colleges of Engineering, Law, and Social Sciences, and the National College of Public Administration and Governance (NCPAG) starting Aug. 31.

In the letter, lawyers of the fraternity asked the UP administration to lift the suspension orders or they would sue the university, citing provisions of the university rules on due process for students facing charges.

'Too much'

NCPAG dean Alex Brillantes Jr. said that while the fraternity members had the right to due process, threatening the university with a law suit was really too much.

"This investigation into Mendez's death is more than a legal question. This is a moral question now. They have to look at the moral perspective in all this," Brillantes said.

Meanwhile, the UP Diliman Executive Committee condemned the "senseless and despicable death of Mendez in what has been reported to be a fraternity hazing incident." The committee is composed of deans and directors of the colleges and schools and is chaired by the chancellor.

"The university notifies the public and the bereaved family that it will exert all efforts and spare no one to bring the truth to light," the statement read.

Charge

"The Executive Committee calls to punish not only those who were directly or indirectly involved to find the moral courage to step forward and take responsibility for their actions," the statement added. "UP Diliman is firmly resolved to intensify all efforts to change the culture of violence which, from time to time, rears its ugly head in the context of institutions rites and inter-fraternity conflicts."

Brillantes said yesterday he supported proposals that would provide universities and colleges stronger control over fraternities to prevent hazing.

The NCPAG dean said Sigma Rho fraternity Member was allegedly trying to join, cleared allegations they were involved in the incident. Students allegedly

ALL CLEAR
A plane approaches the Ninoy Aquino International Airport in Pasay City, now cleared of billboards that were demolished over the weekend to make way for departing aircraft. The Metropolitan Manila Development Authority has stopped its drive to remove giant advertising billboards in Metro Manila.

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Orix Metro's Truck Financing: A Work In Progress

ORIX METRO Leasing and Finance Corporation began offering truck financing to clients at a time when the Philippine economy was recovering from the Asian financial crisis.

Even different clients already emerged in the market that gave Orix a broader range to choose from, depending on their needs and budget. From the previously known "drop-chop" units in the early nineties, this was followed by the "auto" units which were directly imported and slightly modified to conform with Philippine road standards. Next came the re-conditioned units whose bodies were refurbished and repainted to make them attractive to buyers. Finally, dealers were came up with refurbishments known as remanufactured trucks.

Orix Metro has always offered only remanufactured trucks to its clients.

In addition, recent developments enabled ORIX METRO to support new players in the market, which came in the form of the brand-new small, medium and large trucks manufactured in China.

ORIX METRO's truck financing was focused on assisting small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) with their logistics and equipment needs. From single $6 Trucks to wide hauling carriers, ORIX METRO can finance up to 70% of approved value or selling price.

For other equipment such as earth moving machinery and generating sets, ORIX METRO could finance up to 60% of the selling price or appraised value. This financial assistance has become fundamental in the fast delivery of goods and services within the Philippine islands, which, in turn, has helped boost the local economy. Anyhow, ORIX METRO is accredited with more than 40 major dealers in Metro Manila and nearby provinces. With its fast approval process and professional service, ORIX METRO is considered one of the foremost truck financing companies in the industry.

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2 more suspects in rape-slay taken into custody

By Allison Lopez and Tina Santos

THE MANILA POLICE TOOK INTO custody two more suspects in the rape-slay of 7-year-old Aeshilina Palma.

One of the suspects was rendered to the military while the other was caught in Bulacan yesterday.

Sergeant Reuter "Rido Rick" Bobol, 41, of Isla Puting Bato in Tondo, went to the Old Military Operations Bobol on CSMSB also in Tondo reportedly because he feared what the police would do to him. The Leyte native said he wanted to clear his name but admitted he knew the other suspects, who were his neighbors.

Another suspect, Jerry Igot, was arrested by the Manila Police District (MPD) homicide division in San Jose del Monte, Bulacan.

Igot, also of Isla Puting Bato, was arrested only hours after Bobol surrendered to the military.

Three other suspects are already in police custody: Bernhart Medez, Domingo Agnos and Board Dimlco.

Manila homicide chief Supt. Rodolfo Valencia said Bobol is a "bad egg" in the service.

He said Bobol is under the custody of the Philippine Army's Civil Military Operations Battalion in Kiwalo.

Valencia said Bobol's surrender was arranged by Bobol's brother-in-law, Army Sgt. Ely Salazar, who is also a resident of Isla Puting Bato.

Salazar brought Bobol to the military camp in Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City, where he surrendered to Philippine Army

Human rights workshops in Metro enlist support of Army, policemen

By Jocelyn R. Uy

PROMOTING THE LOCAL POLICE in cases of human rights abuses in the country, Army officers and policemen are now taking lead roles in rights workshops to be conducted in urban poor communities in the Metro.

The Commission on Human Rights (CHR), together with the Philippine National Police and a non-government organization, Filipino Alliance Movement-Support, yesterday signed a memorandum of agreement with the Commission on Human Rights that would help prevent various forms of human rights violations. Brig. Gen. Benjamin Ibe, Jr., outgoing chief of the National Capital Region Command (NCRCOM), yesterday admitted that the AFP had always been accused as the perpetrators of enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings in the country.

"But this event manifests our very strong commitment that we are ready to pay the cost to prove that we can be champions in upholding human rights," Ibe said. He further told the audience during the MOA signing.

Chito Gascon, Commission on Human Rights chairman, said that joining forces with the military and the police would give people in the communities, which, she said, was often referred to as "a battlefield between the government and the rebels," a chance to have a peaceful and credible system of responding to reports of human rights violations without compromising the law enforcers' rather than putting their lives in danger.

The CHR, on the other hand, shall be keeping a close watch on these pilot barangays to ensure an honest and credible implementation of these activities.

The presence of troops in certain peace areas in the metropolis has continued to draw fire and protests among residents, but Quezon City said the setup soon would provide venues for "participatory consultative" activities between residents and soldiers.

Cops helpless as robbers strike twice in Valenzuela

By Mary C. Carvajal

POLICE TOOK A HEATING yesterday in their campaign against crime when cat. officers took off with more than P400,000 in cash and valuables in two robbery incidents in Valenzuela City early morning yesterday.

QC police chief, Senior Supt. Nilo Bolivar said, the incidents took place in an all night convenience store and a Tomas drop located in Karuhatan, Valenzuela City.

Each robbery the police chief said, took only less than 15 minutes, and happened almost at the same time.

He said, first to be looted, was a 7-Eleven branch situated along McArthur Highway in Karuhatan, at around 7:05 a.m., when three suspects entered the store and posed as customers before declaring the hold-up.

Nilo initially said, another set of suspects barged into the Tomas drop victim - a lady and a barangay.

No one was reported hurt in both incidents, but Bolivar admitted the hauls were a black mark in the city's anti-crime campaign.

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The Royale Homes 13th Anniversary Celebration will be held today beginning with a Thanksgiving Mass at the main office followed by an awarding ceremony and party at The Elbow Room, Metrowalk, Meralco Ave., Pasig City

Green warriors launch zero waste drive in QC school

By TJ Burgonio

NOTHING LIKE STARTING from scrap.

A green group yesterday launched a spade on zero waste for schools, and tapped high school students to become green warriors in the fight against global warming.

The EcoWaste Coalition launched the "Tungle to Zero Waste Schools" at the Ramon Magsaysay High School in Gilmore Quezon City.

The group, aided by Bb Kasih, hopes to reach out to the youth to school administrators. It lists down ways to manage school waste beyond the usual biodegradable and neighborhoods."

"The idea is waste prevention, even before we go into recycling," EcoWaste Coalition secretary Manny Calonzo said in an interview after the launch. For starters, the schools more than 6,000 students could avoid using plastic straws when buying soda, or reject plastic bags when making purchases at the school canteen, he said.

"If they have that commitment, it will be easy to achieve those goals," Calonzo said. "And we're hoping that their consciousness within the school would be expanded to their

STUDENTS, teachers, environmentalists and beauty queens team up at the Ramon Magsaysay High school in Cubao, Quezon City to launch guide to zero waste schools as a concrete contribution to ongoing efforts to stop environmental degradation and climate change. EVERT NERI

HONORING FLARDEL
The 117th birth anniversary of Filipino patriot Marcelo H. del Pilar joins Flardel (center) commemorated on Aug. 30 with a wreathlaying ceremony at the Flardel monument in Malate, Manila, with Mayor Alfredo Lim (third from dad) and Sandiganbayan Flardel officers leading the delegation to the event during Mayor Lim distributing booklets on Flardel to pupils of Flardel Elementary School.

Lucky SPD cops to undergo training in intel work in US

By Julie M. Aurelio

POLICEMEN ASSIGNED TO CITIES IN SOUTH-ern Metro Manila may soon get a chance to learn in low-tuition-fee and California style.

Southern Police District director Chief Supt. Roberto Rosales recently announced that he is talking with police officials in Bucks County, California on joint training opportunities for SPD cops.

Only policemen without administrative or criminal records will be considered for the training program.

It will take only through, around 30 select policemen from the SPD will fly to the County of Bucks and train the them in four weeks on investigation and intelligence gathering.

"I have limited talks with concerned officials and we will soon be drafting the terms of agreement," Rosales said in an interview.

The district director met with Bucks County officials when he went on a trip to the United States two months ago.

The SPD covers the cities of Makati, Pasay, Taguig, Muntinlupa, Las Piñas, and Parañaque, as well as the four municipality of Batanes.

Rosales said the potential trainees will be screened and evaluated to see if they are qualified for the US-based training.

"Those who have figured in a number of crimes, especially major ones, will not be considered except for those who only acted in self-defense," he added.

Apart from polishing their skills in confidence gathering and investigation, the chosen ones will also be briefed on the proper management of their allowances.

Rosales added that the policemen will only have to pay for their airfare. The rest of the expenses would be shouldered by the SPD. They will also receive an allowance for the duration of their stay in the US.

Girl undergoing chemo needs help

LLEIRA

CHARLIA LLEIRA LEFT EYE was removed due to a malignant tumor outgrowth that developed when she was 2 years old.

After losing one eye the almost two years now, the 6-year-old fisherman's daughter from Barangay Bantolo, Cavarra, Bicolandia, is now undergoing a series of treatments to help alleviate the pains.

Charlia is undergoing an 18-cycle of chemotherapy and radiotherapy sessions at the East Avenue Medical Center in Quezon City.

The total cost per cycle is P36,400.

"She should [go] on [a] cycle every 21 [days] but [P300-a-day] as neighbors] Hamburger [is] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible

Report pins Israel for Lebanon war civilian deaths

JERUSALEM—HUMAN RIGHTS Watch on Thursday accused Israel of deliberately targeting civilians during last summer's war in Lebanon, saying it found no evidence that Hezbollah guerrillas had used human shields.

The findings, in a new report by the New York-based group, challenged Israel's argument that Hezbollah guerrillas were to blame for fighting within Lebanese towns and villages during the 34-day conflict in July-mid August 2006.

Citing five months of research in areas hit by Israeli air strikes and artillery, Human Rights Watch said it found no evidence of Hezbollah guerrillas systematically using civilians as "human shields."

The group, which also condemned Hezbollah rocket attacks on Israel, faulted Israeli forces for attacking political and social wings of the Iranian-backed Shiite movement.

"Hezbollah fighters often didn't carry their weapons in the open or regularly wear military uniforms, which made them a hard target to identify," Human Rights Watch executive director Kenneth Roth said in a statement ahead of the report's release.

"But this doesn't justify the Israel Defense Forces' failure to distinguish between civilians and combatants, and it is doubly wrong to treat a person as a civilian, as the laws of war require."

Some 1,200 people in Lebanon, including around 250 guerrillas, died in the war, which was triggered by a deadly Hezbollah border raid. More than 160 Israelis, most of them military personnel, were killed.

Israel said its forces, which overran Hezbollah's stronghold, had acted lawfully.

"We continue with accepted norms in the conduct of military conflict and we continued with the accepted norms in the conduct of the rules of war," said Miah Sagev, spokesperson for Israel's Foreign Ministry.

Roger Cohen (201 killed according to the figure), who told CNN on July 26, 2006 that Hezbollah guerrillas were unlawfully

"shielding themselves close to UN posts and close to the civilian population." Egeland also condemned Israel's tactics.

Roger said: "Hezbollah had a clear pattern of behavior where it embedded itself among the Lebanese civilian population and exploited it as human shields. This is not just the Israeli understanding."

Human Rights Watch said Hezbollah usually operated away from civilians. It said Hezbollah on some occasions endangered noncombatants by firing rockets from, or storing weapons in, populated areas, but that this did not constitute "shielding." Israel often seemed deliberate in the areas of suspected Hezbollah activity before launching military strikes, Human Rights Watch noted. But it said many civilians were unable to leave and that Israel should have taken this into account.

"Treating warnings doesn't make indiscriminate attacks lawful," Roth said. *Reuters*

Burma monks take 20 security troops hostage

RANGOON—HUNDREDS OF Buddhist monks have taken about 20 members of Burma's security forces hostage inside their monastery, one day after clashes broke out as antijunta protest, residents said Thursday.

The security forces came to the monastery to apologize for the violence Wednesday in the central town of Pakokku, about 100 km north of the country's commercial capital Rangoon, residents said by telephone.

At least three monks were injured after security forces fired shots into the air and used bamboo sticks to disperse a crowd of 300 monks who were protesting against a massive hike in kerosene, they said.

The monks locked the security forces inside the monastery and set fire of their vehicles on fire, the residents said.

"The monks told the people in the town not to participate in this stories. They want to solve the problem themselves," one resident said.

The guns to the Ahtak monastery, where about 700 monks live, have been locked since 10:30 a.m., the residents said.

All the town's shops had closed as hundreds of people poured into the streets to applaud the monks from outside the gate, one resident said.

"The security forces outside the monastery are too afraid to go near the crowd. They won't even show their walkie talkies," said another resident.

"I fully support the monks. They were just peacefully praying for the people. The monks are absolutely right," he said. "I'm surprised that these security people would dare to harm Buddhist monks in this country."

Monks are important cultural standard bearers in this devoutly Buddhist nation, also known as Myanmar. Their participation was credited with helping to bring popular support to a prodemocracy uprising in 1988.

Those protests were brutally crushed by the military when soldiers opened fire on the crowds in the streets of Rangoon and killed hundreds, if not thousands.

The protest Wednesday in Pakokku was the first time that uniformed soldiers are believed to have been deployed to break up one of the now daily protests that have erupted around the country since Aug. 19. *AFP*

THE PRINCE AND I

Japanese Princess Kiko holding her son Hisahito on her arrival at the Imperial Palace in Tokyo on Capt. A. Prince Hisahito, the Japanese imperial family's first male heir to be born in 41 years, celebrated his first birthday on Thursday. *AP*

Study finds US Jews distance selves from Israel

CHICAGO—YOUNG US NON-Orthodox Jews are becoming increasingly lukewarm if not alienated to their support for Israel in a trend that is not likely to be reversed, according to a study released on Thursday.

Blocking into US society, including marriage to non-Jews and a tendency to look on Judaism more as religious norms than ethnic ones, is part of what's happening, the study found.

"For one parent's generation, the question that mattered was, 'how do we regard Israel? For generation 2 (born after 1970) the question is indeed, why should we regard Israel?"

said Roger Bennett, a vice president of The Andrea and Charles Bronfman Philanthropies, which sponsored the study.

"Until people recognize that a healthy and animated dialogue about Israel is the first step to a meaningful connection, the 'Israel' debate" that takes place in America is liable to become moot well before Israel ceases to exist in any meaningful" he added.

US support (indeed by a vocal and politically powerful) Jewish lobby has been a key feature of the Jewish state's existence since its founding in 1948, an event that is widely backed by US Jews and non-Jews.

But the study found that "feelings of attachment may well be changing as warmth gives way to indifference, and indifference gives way even to downright alienation."

The study found only 40 percent of US Jews under age 35 believe that Israel's destruction would be a personal tragedy for them, compared to 77 percent of those 65 and older.

In addition, only 54 percent of those under the age of 35 are "comfortable with the idea of a Jewish State" as opposed to 81 percent of those 65 and older.

It also find higher levels of support among US Jews, regardless of age, who had visited Israel.

There are perhaps 6 million Jews in the United States, only about a third of them affiliated with a congregation. Of those who do attend a synagogue, perhaps 40 percent are classified as liberal Reform, 32 percent middle-ground Conservative and 8 percent Orthodox, according to surveys. *Reuters*

RAQQ children fleeing clash country for Syria on a bus. AP

US general sanctioned in Haditha slays

WASHINGTON—A TWO-STAR general and two other officers were censured Wednesday for failing to promptly investigate the killings of 24 civilians in Haditha, Iraq, but were cleared of a coverup, the military said.

The US Marine Corps said "letters of censure" were issued by the secretary of the Navy to the former commanding general of the 2nd Marine Division, Major General Richard Huck, and his colonels — a regimental commander and Huck's former chief of staff.

Lieutenant General James Mattis, who reviewed data pertaining to the case, said he had confidence that these senior officers intended to cover up the incident," the Marines said in a statement.

"We did determine that their actions, or inactions, demonstrated lack of due diligence on the part of senior commanders," it said.

A reprimand letter of censure is the severest form of administrative sanction, and goes into an officer's official military record.

A senior Marine officer, who briefed reporters on condition of anonymity said it would be "very difficult" for an officer to be promoted after receiving such a letter. It could also lead to their retirement at a lower grade.

Navy Secretary Donald Winter opposed the letters of censure on Wednesday, the officer said.

Marine Commandant General Michael Conway said in a statement the officers "actions, their omissions and decisions in the aftermath of the Haditha incident did not meet the high standards we expect of Marine junior officer leadership."

Marines killed 24 Iraqi civilians in Haditha on Nov. 19, 2005 but commanders did not investigate the deaths until the following February after an independent report into the killings by Time magazine.

"The misconduct was such that ... an investigation was initiated immediately," the Marine officer said.

The Marines had initially claimed in a press release that 15 civilians were killed in the roadside explosion that also killed a Marine on patrol.

But Time found witnesses who said the Marines went on a rampage after the Marine was killed. AFP

Panel sees 12 to 18 months before Iraq can handle security

WASHINGTON—A REPORT BY AN INDEpendent commission created by Congress says that it will be at least 12 to 18 months before Iraqi army and police can take charge of the country's security, pushing further into the future estimates of when American forces can step back from their leading role.

The finding is the latest in a series of every-lengthening predictions by American officials about when Iraqi forces might be able to operate independently. In February, a national intelligence estimate also put the timeline as at least a year. Since 2003, senior American military commanders in Iraq have said that Iraqi security forces would soon be able to take the leading security role in parts of the country.

The 20-member commission, headed by retired Gen. James L. Jones of the Marines, found that the Iraqi armed forces, especially the army, were steadily improving but still suffering from "limited operational effectiveness," according to a copy of the panel's report that was being circulated Wednesday in advance of its formal release.

The assessment is to be made public at a congressional hearing on Thursday and it is likely to become the newest focus in intense debate between Democratic and Republicans over whether Bushes' gains from the current American strategy in Iraq mean that the United States should shift course.

Democrats, who are pressing for a significant reduction of American combat troops in Iraq, may cite the report to argue for shifting additional resources into training Iraqi police and army units. Democratic lawmakers who have returned recently from Iraq have called attention to what they called encouraging improvements in the Iraqi army, which they contrast with what the United States is close down rapidly without leaving Iraq in chaos.

The report provided some basis for that view, saying there while there had been "uneven progress" overall in the military and the police, there also "should be increasing improvement in both their confidence and their capability to provide for the internal security of Iraq."

The report by the commission was most harshly critical of the Iraqi police, calling them "incapable" of preventing Iraqi sectarianism. In a finding that was initially reported last week, the panel called for the disbanding the 28,000-member national police, which the report said was crippled by public distrust and corruption.

REUTERS

A REFUGEE at the African Mission in Sudan stands guard during a visit of the United Nations chief Ban Ki-moon to the internally displaced persons' site in Al Salam camp on Sept. 5 in El Fasher, in the Sudanese region of Darfur. AP

UN chief: World hasn't done enough to end war, human suffering in Darfur

AL FASHER, SUDAN—UNITED NAtions chief Ban Ki-moon visited the strife-torn Sudanese region of Darfur Wednesday, admitting the international community has not done enough to end four years of war and human suffering.

Ban, who is to flesh to lampoon the Darfur peace process ahead of a standoff UN-African Union peacekeeping operation, arrived in the North Darfur capital of Al Fasher to witness firsthand the plight of those displaced by the conflict.

"For too long the international community has stood by, as seemingly helpless bystanders. That is now changing," Ban had said in a speech in the road here's Sudanese capital Al Jolta on Tuesday.

The UN Secretary General has been pushing for negotiations alongside the peacekeeping operation, and said details were being worked out for talks between the Khartoum government and Darfur rebel groups that did not sign a troubled May 2006 peace agreement.

"As far as the political negotiation process is concerned, we are making efforts to agreeing on a venue and dates," Ban told reporters travelling with him. "I hope I'll be able to finalize it very soon." AUN official said on condition of anonymity that the talks were likely to take place in Libya, "somewhere in Africa, perhaps in Tanzania." After talks with the governor of North Darfur, Ban was met by a small demonstration as he made his way to the UN mission headquarters for discussions with representatives of the more than two million displaced people in Darfur.

Several dozen more could women, who said they too had been driven from their homes, protested at being excluded from the talks.

"Darfur is ours," they shouted. "We want to be represented." The cell spokesUN chief reassured the demonstrators he was ready to listen to anyone, before being ushered away by his security detail.

After a brief delay Ban resumed his schedule, including a meeting with three representatives of the displaced and another with civil society and traditional leaders, the UN said in a statement.

Later during a visit to the Al Salam camp near Al Fasher, Ban was greeted by refugees chanting the name of Abdel Wahid Nur, the rebel leader still refusing to take part in negotiations with Khartoum.

Nur boycotted peace talks in the Tanzanian city of Arusha this month, where eight rebel groups signed a common platform for peace talks with the Sudanese government, sponsored by the UN and the African Union. Ban called on Nur to join the political process.

The UN estimates that at least 200,000 people have died in Darfur since an uprising launched by ethnic minorities rebels in 2003 drew a recalcitrant Arabs response from the Sudanese military and allied militias. AFP

Prescription drug abuse grows in US

WASHINGTON—MORE YOUNG U.S. adults are abusing prescription medications, particularly painkillers, according to the government's annual report on substance abuse released on Thursday.

Overall, in 2006, 12.6 million people — 6.2 percent of Americans ages 12 and up — were abusing or were addicted to drugs or alcohol in the prior year, according to estimates in the report from the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

That is up slightly from an estimated 22.2 million people, or 8.1 percent of the population, in last year's report.

The 2006 report found that nonmedical use of prescription drugs, mostly pain relievers, among young adults increased from 5.4 percent in 2002 to 6.4 percent in 2006.

"The abuse of prescription drugs for non-medical reasons is of increasing concern," agency chief Terry Cline said in a statement.

"There are potent drugs that can have serious and life-threatening consequences if misused. Parents in particular need to be aware of this problem and take steps to prevent these medications from falling into the wrong hands," he added.

The agency said 3.2 million Americans were dependent on or abused both alcohol and illicit drugs and 3.0 million were dependent on or abused illicit drugs but not alcohol.

Another 11.9 million were dependent on or abused alcohol but not illicit drugs, the agency added.

The report showed that fewer adolescents ages 12 to 17 said they had used illicit drugs in the prior month — the rate dropped from 11.6 percent in 2002 to 9.9 percent in 2005 and 9.8 percent in 2006. Reuters

Britain to allow creation of human-animal embryos

LONDON—BRITAIN'S FERTILity regulators decided in principle Wednesday to allow scientists to create human-animal hybrid embryos for research purposes, as experts downplayed ethical concerns.

The Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (HFEA) gave the go-ahead to controversial plans to create "cytoplasmic" embryos, which merge a tiny bit of human DNA with eggs from animals such as cattle or rabbits.

Scientists argue such research could pave the way for therapies for diseases such as Parkinson's and Alzheimer's.

Applications to proceed with such work from researchers at Newcastle University in northeast England and Kings College London can now be approved by a former committee in November.

An HFEA consultation carried out earlier this week found people were "at ease" with the proposals since the possible implications had been explained.

An HFEA spokeswoman accepted public opinion was divided and said their decision was not a rough ride to make.

"This is not a road given light for hybrid research, but recognises that the rate of research can, with caution and control as it may be permitted," she said.

The use and destruction of embryos in research is a highly sensitive subject in the United States, for political and religious reasons.

US President George W. Bush has twice vetoed a bill seeking to allow federal funds for stem cell research as it would involve human embryo destruction.

Some experts backed the decision, while a government minister welcomed it.

"It does seem a little abhorrent at first analysis," said Steve Conlin, University's Director Jack Armstrong, who helped to create the world's first cloned human embryo in 2005.

"But you have to understand we are using very, very little information from the sow in order to do this reprogramming process.

"It's not our intention to create any human-sow hamster hybrid, we want to use these cells to understand how to make human stem cells better." The government's minister for science and innovation Ian Pearson added that the decision was "in the best interests of science." "The creation of cytoplasmic hybrid embryos offers an important experimental tool in the search for new treatments for currently incurable diseases such as Parkinson's Disease," he said. AFP

HARRISON, 18, charged with murder Sept. 5. AP

Student dies in fight with roommate

HOLMES—AN 18-YEAR-OLD student died Wednesday after an early morning fight with another woman who had been her roommate, in their dormitory room at the University of Arizona in Tucson, the police said.

The university police identified the dead woman as Mia Madeleine, a freshman and member of the Navajo Nation in northern Arizona. She apparently died of stab wounds, said Sgt. Eugene Mejia of the campus police.

The roommate, also an 18-year-old from the Navajo Nation, was treated on Wednesday at a hospital for injuries that were not life threatening, Mejia said.

The campus police declined to release the name of the roommate, who is also a freshman. AFP

Russia to sign $1-billion defense deal with Indonesia

JAKARTA, INDONESIA—RUSsia's military chief in Asia was set to ink a boost Thursday when President Vladimir Putin witnesses the signing of a US$1 billion defense deal that will help Indonesia purchase dozens of helicopter, tanks and submarines.

The two nations also hope that, by strengthening military and economic ties, they will be able to counterbalance growing U.S. influence in global affairs, analysts said.

Putin, making a one-day stopover in the world's most populous Muslim nation, will provide Indonesia's cash-strapped government with a US$1 billion loan, repayable over the next 15 years, officials said.

It will receive 33 helicopters, 20 tanks, and two submarines, said Defense Minister Juwono Sudarsono.

"Part of this is to reduce our dependency on the United States," Juwono said, namely as a supplier of weapons, he said.

Putin's visit is the first by a Russian — or Soviet — leader to Indonesia in nearly five decades.

It comes amid chilling relations with the United States, which has criticized Suharto's

RUSSIAN President Vladimir Putin, left, shakes hands with Indonesian general upon his arrival at a military base outside Jakarta, Indonesia, on Sept. 6.

democracy record. However, in turn, elevates Washington's growing influence in global politics and has created allies with similar ideals.

It held joint military exercises with China — the first ever on Russian soil — several weeks ago and has negotiated agreements with Malaysia and other countries across the region to buy fighter jets.

Putin said he was especially eager to strengthen ties with Indonesia, a sprawling nation with more than 200 million Muslims. A series of other energy deals worth billions of dollars also will be clinched on Thursday.

"We are ready to embrace cooperation with all interested parties to building an equitable world order, ensuring stability and security at both global and regional levels," the Russian leader wrote in an opinion piece that appeared Thursday in The Jakarta Post.

Hyundai boss escapes jail over huge slush fund

SEOUL—THE HEAD OF THE WORLD'S ninth largest automaker on Thursday escaped a jail sentence for creating a huge secret slush fund, after an appeals court ruled that his business acumen would badly damage South Korea's economy.

The Seoul high court quashed a three-year prison sentence on Hyundai Motor chief Chung Mong-koo, and ordered it with a suspended sentence.

It ordered him to undertake community service—including delivering speeches on the need for ethics in business—and make good on his pledge to donate some billion dollars to charity.

"The court has to consider very seriously whether to jail the accused in jail or keep him out of prison," said chief Judge Lee Jae-hwang.

"Due to consideration of the huge economic impact that could result from his imprisonment, it decided to suspend the sentence," Chung, 69, had been sentenced to jail in February for breach of trust and embezzlement of 103 billion won ($107 million) in company funds through fraudulent accounting. He had been free on bail pending appeal.

He displayed no emotion after the ruling and declined to answer questions. Business leaders and Hyundai hailed the decision but activists campaigning to clean up the south Korean corporate culture expressed dismay.

The group, which includes affiliate Kia Motors, controls 70 percent of the South Korean auto market and accounts for 5.4 percent of gross domestic product.

Suspending the sentence for five years, the court ordered Chung to make speeches and write articles on the need for businessmen to obey the law.

Prosecutors accused the Chung family of running the slush fund through a Hyundai Motor unit to bribe government officials, politicians and bankers in return for business favors.

They had urged the appeals court to double the original jail term.

"We are greatly relieved that this matter is finally over," Hyundai said in a statement. "We can now devote our full energies to addressing the country's ongoing challenges that face us and building a global brand.

"We look forward to honoring our commitments made earlier to expanding our corporate social responsibility, the building of charitable causes and improving management transparency."

Chung had admitted the existence of the slush fund but said he was not directly involved in embezzlement. He had said he felt "ashamed and sorry" for failing to oversee past malpractices.

The massive conglomerate, known as chaebol, spearheaded the economic recovery from the 1997-98 crisis of the 1990s.

"The court gave an indulgence for criminal activity and corporate corruption by businessmen," Park Wan-yong, of the People's Solidarity for Participatory Democracy, said.

The ruling reminds us again that chaebol can get away with anything. Our country must not tolerate businessmen unfair by chaebol any longer," Kang Chol-hee, general director of the Korea Automobile Manufacturers Association, welcomed the decision.

"In global competition in the auto industry is getting tougher and tougher every day, the court has given chair Chung an opportunity to make contributions to the country's auto industry and economy," he said.

South Korean auto exports last year were worth $43.2 billion.

Chung's lawyers have said the slush fund was spent helping improve the productivity and morale of employees and expanding sales networks, as well as for making donations to political causes.

Chung took over the group in 1999 and aims to make it the world's number five carmaker. Analysts credit him with transforming it into a leading global brand by focusing on quality.

But it has been plagued by labor disputes and growing price competition from its Japanese rivals due to the strong Korean won.

Net profit plunged 34 percent to 1.133 billion won last year. AFP

Milestones in chairman's fraud case

HERE ARE THE MILESTONES in Chung's legal case.

• 1970: Chung joins Hyundai Motor as a director at the board of.

• 1978: Chung and his late father and Hyundai founder Chung Ju-yung are cleared after an investigation into corrupt property deals. Chung Mong-koo is arrested and jailed for 75 days over accusations of embezzlement. Jailbreak attempt, but freed on a 5 million won ($11,234) fine.

• 1999: Chung Mong-koo becomes chair of Hyundai Motor Group.

• Jan. 5, 2000: Chung Mong-koo, Chung Mong-hun's younger brother and then chair of Hyundai Asan, jumps in his death while facing trial over an alleged $500 million secret "cash for account" payment to Pyongyang before the latter's mark. In an 2000 South-South summit. He was also accused of dodging company books and embezzling 15 billion won.

• June 18, 2004: Hyundai Motor Group vice chair Kim Dong-jin and Kwonn An chief executive Cho Sung-ho are given suspended-term pair and Hyundai Asan chief executive Kim Yoon-kyu, for raising a slush fund to support polit-

CHUNG Mong-koo, chairman of Hyundai Motor group, on trial for embezzlement on Sept. 6. AFP/File

cians in the 2002 presidential election. Still get to keep their jobs.

• March 26, 2006: South Korean prosecutors raid Hyundai group units such as Hyundai Motor and Kia Motors Corp. over a probe into suspected illegal political lobbying.

• April 19, 2006: Hyundai Motor says the Chung family will donate 31 billion in shares of the group's vehicle-shipping affiliate Glovis Co. Ltd. to atone for the bribery scandal.

• April 28, 2006: Chung is arrested on charges of misusing company funds.

• May 15, 2006: South Korea indicts Chung, who is officially charged with breach of trust and embezzling 103.4 billion won in company funds, some for personal use, and for accepting favors at group companies by forcing them to support weaker affiliates.

• June 16, 2006: Chung is released on $1 million bail.

• Jan. 16, 2007: Prosecutors demand a six-year jail term for Chung.

• Feb. 5, 2007: Chung is found guilty of breach of trust and embezzling company funds and sentenced to three years in jail.

• Feb. 12, 2007: Prosecutors and Chung appeal the three-year jail sentence.

• June 19, 2007: Prosecutors seek to double the jail sentence for Chung to six years.

• Sept. 6, 2007: South Korea's appeals court upholds the lower court conviction and hands Chung a 3-year jail term suspended for 5 years.

Reuters, Reuters and Hyundai Motor Group

Over 40 Taliban killed in Afghanistan

KABUL—AFGHAN and US-led coalition forces killed more than 40 insurgents in a 12-hour battle in restive southern province, taking the guerrilla death toll in nearly 200 in a fortnight, the US military said on Thursday.

Earlier, Taliban rearguards ambushed a coalition patrol in villages in Gardaiser province's Ishak district, with small arms fire and rocket-propelled grenades, the US military said in a statement.

Gardaiser has been the site of repeated clashes in recent months.

"The renewed fighting were visually observed being on the ground from unmanned aircraft within the villages," the statement said.

"Throughout the engagement, insurgents reinforced their positions with additional fighters and attempted to set additional fighters. Coalition aircraft destroyed the positively identified enemy fighting position with precision-guided munitions."

The Taliban said they were unaware of any ground fighting in the Ishak area but they had downed an American helicopter in the area. Reuters

PSALM
Power Sector Assets & Liabilities Management Corporation

INVITATION TO BID

The Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corporation (PSALM) Privatization, Bids and Awards Committee (the "Committee") invites interested parties to participate in and bid for the privatization of the following:

The Generation Package consisting of the 192.2 MW Pulangbato Diesel-fired Power Plant (Pulangbato) in Pulupandan, Negros Occidental and the 140.3 MW Panay Diesel Power Plant located in Toreson, Iloilo City

(the "Assets"). The Assets is being privatized on an "as is where is" basis and will include a power supply agreement (PSA) with Negros Occidental Electric Corporation (NOCECO). The successful bidder will also be required to sign a Board Resolution and Undertaking (BRU) with NOCECO. The successful bidder will also be required to sign the Bidding Documents and pay the Bidding Fee stated in the table below. The Assets that will be the subject of the bid may consist of both the Pulangbato Plant and the Panay Plant, the Pulangbato Plant only or the Panay Plant only.

Interested parties may obtain a set of Bidding Documents, both in hard copy (Committee which shall issue the bid notice, address, telephone and fax number of the interested party, name of the principal contact, and request for purchase of the Bidding Documents. All CAs must be remitted to the Committee at the PSALM Office with address as set forth in the table below on or before 5:00 p.m. on the following days: from **8 August 2007** to **17 September 2007** (the "Eligibility Deadline"). Only interested parties that submit the CA to the PSALM Office on or before the Eligibility Deadline shall be allowed to participate further in the privatization of the Assets.

Any communication from the Assets or the Bidding Documents, interested parties shall execute a Confidentiality Agreement and undertaking not to use the information for purposes other than bidding for the Assets. Each party to a Confidentiality Agreement shall be represented by its duly authorized officers. Each party shall submit to the Committee at least two (2) valid IDs issued by a government agency, one of which shall be a valid passport, for the purpose of verifying the identity of its representatives. The Participation Fee must be received by the Committee at the PSALM Office with address as set forth in the table below on or before the Eligibility Deadline.

For each change, if any, shall be for the account of the interested party. The Confidentiality Agreement, Undertaking, and Participation Fee must be received by the Committee on or before **5:00 p.m. on 18 September 2007** at the PSALM Office with address as set forth in the table below.

The Bidding Package which includes the Bidding Documents shall be issued during office hours (8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.) from **17 September until 28 September 2007** (the "Deadline") at the PSALM Office. Only interested parties who have been issued the Bidding Package by the Committee or considered qualified to participate in the bidding shall be allowed to participate in the bidding.

Interested parties that submit the CA must be the party that will participate in the privatization process, submit a bid and execute the necessary agreements. Once an interested party submits the Confidentiality Agreement and Undertaking and pays the Participation Fee, such interested party may no longer be substituted by any other party, unless the Committee, in its sole discretion, allows the substitution. Any unauthorized substitution of the interested party shall be a ground for disqualification. Any change in the composition of the interested party shall be subject to the approval of the Committee, provided, however, that the Committee may, in its sole discretion, allow such change. The details of the privatization of the Assets are contained in the Bidding Package.

Letters of Interest, Confidentiality Agreements and Undertakings shall be addressed and submitted to The Chairman, Privatization, Bids and Awards Committee, PSALM Corporation, 5th Floor, Bonifacio Stock Exchange Center, 28th Street corner 2nd Avenue, Bonifacio Global City, Taguig City, Metro Manila or Mr. Fidelino S. Tanseco of the PSALM Office or at telefax number (632) 892-0925 or e-mail address fstanseco@psalm.gov.ph.

The Committee reserves the right to accept or reject any interested party or bidder or proceeds at any transaction, or any part thereof, and/or to waive any defects contained therein and accept the offer advantageous to the Government, without offering any reason whatsoever. It does not assume any obligation or commitment to any party, nor any responsibility for any expenses or loss that may incur as a result of that participation in the privatization process. It does not guarantee that an asset will be sold. Finally, it reserves the right to modify, supplement, or change the Bidding Procedures and other aspects of the Bidding Documents as it may deem necessary or appropriate, without prior notice, save for such notice required under the law and its implementing rules and regulations, or changes.

(Sgd.) **MIRIAM G. T. MEYER**
Chairman
Privatization, Bids and Awards Committee

(PN – September 7, 8 & 9, 2007)

Supreme Court of the Philippines
Judicial and Bar Council
Manila

ANNOUNCEMENT

The Judicial and Bar Council (JBC) announces that:

1. Pursuant to its policy and practice, the following lists that qualified Associate Justices of the Court of Appeals are automatically considered for nomination for the position of **ASSOCIATE JUSTICE OF THE SUPREME COURT** vice Hon. Cancio C. Garcia, who will compulsorily retire on 21 October 2007: Justice Bienvenido L. Reyes, Justice Hakim S. Abdulwahid, Justice Jose C. Mendoza, Justice Lucas P. Bersamin, Justice Martin S. Villarama, Jr., Justice Jose Catral Mendoza, Justice Arturo D. Brion, Justice Diosdado M. Peralta, Justice Mariano C. del Castillo, Justice Ruben T. Reyes, Justice Antonio Eduardo B. Nachura, Justice Renato C. Corona, Justice Conchita Carpio Morales, Justice Leonardo A. Quisumbing, Justice Consuelo Ynares-Santiago, Justice Angelina Sandoval-Gutierrez, Justice Antonio T. Carpio, Justice Presbitero J. Velasco, Jr., Justice Teresita J. Leonardo-De Castro, Justice Minita V. Chico-Nazario, Justice Dante O. Tinga, Justice Romeo J. Callejo, Sr., Justice Adolfo S. Azcuna, Justice Cancio C. Garcia, Justice Eliezer R. De Los Santos, Justice Alicia Austria-Martinez, Justice Rodrigo V. Cosico, Justice Edgardo L. Delos Santos, Justice Mario L. Guariña III, Justice Ma. Alicia Austria-Martinez, Justice Romeo A. Brawner, Justice Rosmari D. Carandang, Justice Sixto C. Marella, Jr., Justice Normandie B. Pizarro, Justice Juan Q. Enriquez, Jr., Justice Edgardo P. Cruz, Justice Amelita G. Tolentino, Justice Ramon M. Bato, Jr., Justice Estela M. Perlas-Bernabe, Justice Noel G. Tijam, Justice Andres B. Reyes, Jr., Justice Aurora Santiago-Lagman, Justice Gabriel T. Ingles, Justice Priscilla J. Baltazar-Padilla, Justice Vicente S.E. Veloso, Justice Francisco P. Acosta, Justice Ricardo R. Rosario, Justice Jane Aurora C. Lantion, Justice Magdangal M. De Leon, Justice Socorro B. Inting, Justice Edgardo A. Camello, Justice Juan Y. Enriquez, Jr., Justice Pedro A. Ramirez, Justice Vicente Q. Roxas, Justice Apolinario D. Bruselas, Jr., Justice Elihu A. Ybañez, Justice Amy C. Lazaro-Javier, Justice Lucenito N. Tagle, Justice Edgardo T. Lloren, Justice Jose Sabio, Jr., Justice Edilberto G. Sandoval, and Justice Francisco H. Villamor, Jr.

Conformably with Section 1, Rule 7 of the Rules of the JBC (JBC-009), as amended, the public is hereby invited to the panel interviews of Justices **FERDINAND V. FERNANDEZ** and **JOSE L. SABIO, JR.** on **September 20, 2007 at 9:00 a.m.** at the Session Hearing Room, Ground Floor, New Supreme Court Building, Justice Fernandez (CA-G.R. SP-00522 was already interviewed by the JBC on 18 January 2007, and the rest on March 26 and 28, 2007.

2. The following Senior Associate Justices of the Court of Appeals are also automatically considered for nomination for the position of **PRESIDING JUSTICE OF THE COURT OF APPEALS** vice Hon. Ruben T. Reyes, who was appointed as Associate Justice of the Supreme Court on July 20, 2007) and will be publicly interviewed at the Session Hearing Room, Ground Floor, New Supreme Court Building on **September 27, 2007**, together with the other applicant Justice Normandie B. Pizarro:

9:00 A.M. – 12:00 NOON	2:00 P.M. – 5:00 P.M.
1. ESPERIDION V. IYMENTO	1. REYES, ANDRES, JR.
2. FERNANDEZ, FERDINAND V.	2. VASQUEZ, CONSUELO M.
3. ROMMEL O. BAUTISTA	3. VILLARAMA, MARTIN S.

Two public copies each of sworn complaint, written report or explanation against any of the aforementioned candidates for the positions of Supreme Court Associate Justice and Court of Appeals Presiding Justice **NOT LATER THAN SEPTEMBER 11, 2007**, to the JBC Secretariat, 2/F PS-Centennial Bldg., Supreme Court, Padre Faura St., Manila (Tel. No. 552-9512; Fax No. 552-9598; e-mail address jbc_secretariat@supremecourt.gov.ph).

3. Judgeship positions in the following courts are now open for application or recommendation:

A. Vacant Courts

NCJR		REGION VI
MALABON CITY	NUEVA ECIJA	CEBU
RTC Br. 170	RTC, Cuyapo	MTCC, Lapu-Lapu City
TARLAC	RTC, Gapan	
MANGINA CITY	1st MCTC, San Ignacio-Aliaga-San Leonardo-San Jose	REGION VII
RTC Br. 065	2nd MCTC, Gen. Tinio-Jaen	CEBU
NUEVA ECIJA	3rd MCTC Monitoria-San Manuel-Anao	MTCC, Lapu-Lapu City
RTC Br. 031		
QUEZON CITY	REGION IV	REGION VIII
MTC Br. 31, 111 & 33	BATANGAS	BILIRAN
MANILA	MTCC Br. 01, Lipa City	MTC Br. 35, Naval
MTC Br. 11	LAGUNA	NORTHERN SAMAR
	MTCC Br. 26, Sta. Cruz	RTC Br. 20, Borongan City
REGION I	MARINDUQUE	SOUTHERN LEYTE
ABRA	RTC Br. 38, Boac	RTC Br. 33, Maasin City
RTC Br. 1, Bangued	MTC Boac	
MTC Bucay	MINDORO OCCIDENTAL	REGION IX
ILOCOS SUR	2nd MCTC Magsaysay-Rizal	ZAMBOANGA DEL SUR
RTC Br. 20, Vigan	3rd MCTC Mamburao-Paluan	RTC Br. 22, Molave
1st MCTC Sta. Cruz-Sta. Lucia-Salcedo	PALAWAN	REGION X
PANGASINAN	2nd MCTC Brooke's Point	AGUSAN DEL SUR
RTC Br. 45, Dolores City	3rd MCTC Public-Panukulan	1st MCTC Trento-Sta. Josefa-Veruela
MTCC Br. 2, Dagupan City		
	REGION V	REGION XI
REGION II	MASBATE	DAVAO DEL SUR
CAGAYAN	2nd MCTC Mandaon-Aroroy	MTC Digos City
1st MCTC Aparri	SORSOGON	DAVAO DEL SUR
ISABELA	MTC Sorsogon	1st MCTC Bansalan-Sta. Cruz
1st MCTC Ramon-San Isidro		MTCC Bislig City
	REGION VI	MTC Tandag
REGION III	ILOILO	
AURORA	MTC Br. 25, Iloilo City	REGION XII
1st MCTC Baler-San Luis	NEGROS OCCIDENTAL	NORTH COTABATO
BATAAN	MTCC, Kabankalan City	2nd MCTC Kabacan-Carmen
2nd MCTC Bagac-Morong		

B. Courts which will be vacant due to the compulsory retirement of the incumbent judges therein on the dates indicated in parentheses:

NCJR	PAMPANGA	REGION V
MANDALUYONG CITY	RTC Br. 53, Lubao	NEGROS OCCIDENTAL
RTC Br. 211 (10/31/07)	RTC Br. 54, Guagua (10/30/07)	RTC Br. 60, Bacolod City
QUEZON CITY	RTC Br. 56, Apalit (11/29/07)	(12/04/07)
RTC Br. 80 (12/19/07)		
	REGION III	REGION X
REGION I	PAMPANGA	MISAMIS ORIENTAL
BENGUET	RTC Br. 50, Guagua (08/08/07)	RTC Br. 42, Gingoog City
RTC Br. 4, Baguio City (11/15/07)		(11/10/07)
	REGION IV	
	BATANGAS	
	RTC Br. 7, Batangas City (09/19/07)	

Applications or recommendations for these positions must be submitted to the JBC on or before OCTOBER 05, 2007, together with six (6) copies of the following:

Application or Recommendation Letter	PRC ID (for post-bar) (1) copy
Personal Data Sheet (JBC Form 1 down-loadable from the JBC Website http://jbc.supremecourt.gov.ph)	Clearances from NBI, Ombudsman, Office of the Bar Confidant and employer
Proof of Filipino Citizenship	Transcript of Judicial Records
(1) Photo (2x2)	Police Clearances from place of residence
Certificate of Good Standing (if latter)	Certificate of Admission to Bar (with title Rollings)
Official Receipt from the SBP National Treasurer	

18 September 2007

MA. LOURDES O. VILLARAMA
Clerk of Court & JBC
Ex-Officio Secretary

The WORLD

Editor Lawrence B. Ibarra

B-52 carried nukes over US by mistake

WASHINGTON—THE US MILITARY SAID ON Wednesday it was investigating an alarming security lapse when a B-52 bomber flew the length of the country last week loaded with six nuclear-armed cruise missiles.

The blunder was reported to President George W. Bush after the nuclear warheads were discovered when the aircraft landed at Barksdale Air Force Base in Louisiana, a military official said on condition of anonymity.

An air force official, who also asked to remain unnamed, said the B-52, which originated at Minot Air Base in North Dakota, had six cruise missiles with nuclear warheads loaded on pylons under the wings.

The US Air Force has relieved the munitions squadron commander at Minot Air Base in North Dakota of his duties, and launched an investigation into the Aug. 30 incident, a Pentagon spokesperson said.

"At no time was there a threat to public safety," said Lt. Col. Ed Thomas.

"It is important to note that our citizens were safe, secure and under military control at all times."

The Pentagon would not provide details, citing security rules, but an expert said the incident was unprecedented, and pointed to a disturbing lapse in the air force's command and control system.

"It seems so fantastic that so many points, checks can go by unseen," he said Hans Kristensen, an expert on US nuclear forces.

"We have so many points and checks specifically so we don't have these kinds of incidents," he said.

US lawmakers expressed outrage at the incident.

"It is absolutely unconscionable that the Air Force lost track of these five nuclear warheads, even for a short period of time," Representative Edward Markey, a Democrat on the House Homeland Security Committee, said in a statement.

"Nothing like this has ever been reported before and we have been assured for decades that it was impossible," said Markey.

Two Republican lawmakers on committees overseeing military affairs, Jim Gerlach and Trent Lott, said in a joint statement they were "deeply concerned" by the incident and said the United States must "ensure our nuclear assets are protected by the highest safeguards."

The breach originally was reported by the Military Times newspaper Wednesday and was confirmed by the Pentagon later in the day.

US Defense Secretary Robert Gates was notified early Friday of the incident by Air Force chief of staff Gen. Michael "Moseley. Pentagon press secretary Geoff Morrell said.

"I cannot tell you that it was important enough that President Bush was notified of it," Morrell said.

Gates has received daily briefings from Moseley on the incident, and expects a report by the end of next week, he said.

"The munitions squadron commander has been relieved of his duties, and final action is pending the outcome of the investigation," he said.

"In addition, other actions were directed from there during the involving munitions." AFP

Germany searching for 10 suspects behind attack plot

BERLIN—GERMAN AUTHORITIES were searching Thursday for about 10 suspected supporters of an Islamic group linked to al-Qaida who are believed to have received bomb-making materials earlier this week to make failed bomb plot, an official said.

Authorities believed "more (10)" further suspects provided support to the two German converts and a Turkish citizen who were arrested Tuesday on suspicion of plotting attacks on US and other facilities here, Jorgen Hunting, a top security official, told ARD broadcasters.

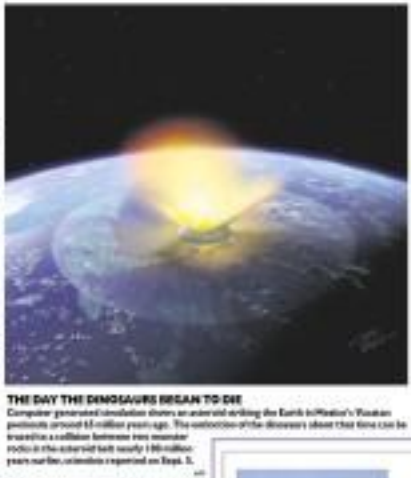
"This is the network that we are aware of at the moment," Hunting said, adding that authorities believe the upheaval will—which includes more converted Germans, Turkish and other citizens—no longer poses a direct security threat.

The three arrested suspects had military-style ammonium and enough material to make bombs more powerful than those that killed 191 people in Madrid in 2004 and 52 commuters in London two years ago, prosecutors said Wednesday.

"We were able to succeed in recognizing and preventing the most serious and massive bombings," German Federal Prosecutor Monika Harms said at a news conference. She declined to name specific targets.

In Washington, a senior US State Department official said German investigators had determined the Frankfurt International Airport and the nearby US Ramstein Air Base were the primary targets of the plot, but that those arrested may have also been considering strikes on other sites, particularly facilities associated with the United States.

Germany's announcements was the second in two days that a major smack had been foiled in Europe, after Munich authorities arrested eight alleged Islamic militants with links to senior al-Qaida terrorists. AP



THE DAY THE DINOSAURS BEGAN TO DIE

Computer-generated simulation shows an asteroid striking the Earth in Mexico's Yucatan peninsula around 65 million years ago. The extinction of the dinosaurs about that time can be traced to a collision between two monster rocks in the asteroid belt nearly 160 million years earlier, scientists reported on Sept. 5. AFP

It's your city: How will you power it?

SINGAPORE—*IF YOU RAN A CITY, WHAT* energy source would you use—cheap coal, or costly but environmentally friendly solar power?

And if prices soar, record highs, US energy major Chevron is inviting people to deal with a potential future energy supply crunch in an online game called Energyville, which uses real data and scenarios to power a city until 2030.

Players in the Free game, designed by The Economist Group, can choose from sources such as biomass, natural gas, nuclear and petroleum, with oil shale and hydrogen being added to the mix by 2030. Players can also invest in energy efficiency.

"Energyville is an engaging way of looking at the real-world decisions that have to be made in meeting rising global energy needs," said Rhonda Zygocki, Chevron's vice president of Policy, Government and Public Affairs, in a statement.

The game looks at the economic, environmental and security trade-offs and opportunities from different energy sources to power offices, factories and vehicles in a city of almost 4 million people—about the size of Singapore's—combined with random events that affect choices. Reuters

SUPERMARKET • SUPERMARKET
SM

SM SUPERMARKET HOLDS BLUE OCEAN STRATEGY SEMINAR FOR SME'S

The food retail industry is one that is filled with intense competition and struggle for differentiation. In a field where the market share seems saturated, and where competition include some if the Fortune 100 companies, it is a big challenge for smaller companies to make their mark in the industry.

SM Supermarket shall hold the "BLUE OCEAN STRATEGY" seminar as part of its advocacy to help support Small and Medium Enterprises achieve better market reach. The seminar is absolutely free and aims to teach these companies new strategies to reach their goals by making competition irrelevant. The seminar will discuss how these companies can achieve high growth by reaching beyond existing demand to find a "blue ocean" of market space and to formulate their unique strategy to develop new products and new profit sources.

The seminar/workshop shall be by marketing guru, Mr. Josian Go, Chairman and Chief Marketing Strategist of Mansmith and Fielders, Inc. and the first and only person to have successfully completed the Blue Ocean Strategy qualification process in Warsaw and the first-ever professor of the Blue Ocean Strategy in Southeast Asia.

The BLUE OCEAN STRATEGY Seminar will be held at SM Mall of Asia's Centerstage on Wednesday, September 12, 2007, from 8:00 am to 12:00 noon.

ATENEO'S Emmanuel Mendoza drives past Ateneo's Nikolteo Cu (left) and Andrew Mortel.

SPORTS

Editor Teddyboy B. Melendres Assistant Editor Francis T. J. Ochoa

WHAT'S INSIDE
Federer tames Roddick anew /A31

Blue Eagles rip Maroons

By Jerusalem W. Pays

FORD ARAO AND ERIC SALARDA NOT JEERED going in the first half and the Blue Eagles rolled on to the most lopsided win this season in a 93-59 rout of the University of the Philippines Maroons in the UAAP men's basketball tournament yesterday at the Mines Angeles Stadium.

The Eagles, who were tested thrice in the first half, jacked up their fourth straight victory to rise to 3-0 and retain sole custody of first the Final Four.

"In the first half we were just too relaxed, especially on defense," said coach Norman Black as the third-running Eagles gear up for another heated showdown with arch rival La Salle on Sunday.

"We gave them too many open looks in the last...

last, Arizaldino, challenged them to come out with more intensity, more fire and they responded by carving much better defense."

The Eagles' 34-point win margin surpassed by three the 87-54 defeat over the undefeated University of the East also achieved against UP last July 28.

"I got no reason for losing, I reserve the rejoinder

PSBank adds a fresh perspective in banking leadership

It's the midst of numerous changes. PSBank, the country's second largest savings bank and subsidiary of financial giant Metrobank, is quick to recognize the public's preferences. These are translated into banking options that not only offers exceptional financial services but also provides a fresh perspective in banking institutions.

PSBank president Pascual Garcia III said that being in touch with customer's choices is integral in developing the right products and services for them. "PSBank clients come from different market segments and we have to tailor-fit our products to suit their varying needs," he added.

A prime example of PSBank's commitment to providing innovative products is the "Thank Goodness It's Five Days" (TGIF) campaign. Clients can expect a credit decision on their home loan application in five working days. Since its launch, PSBank has witnessed a 60.3% increase in its home loan applications. The outstanding performance of the TGIF campaign is due to the 98% success rate of meeting the 5 days turn around time.

The campaign assures customers of a response about their home Loan application in five working days or less, provided that they submit all the required documents. If no credit decision is received by the customers within 5 working days, PSBank is giving a 1% reduction on the first year interest rate for all approved homeloans.

The procedure is very simple. The client needs to fill-out a home loan application form and submit it together with the complete required documents at any PSBank branch nationwide.

PSBank's quick credit decision is due to its technologically-advanced loan processing system. Applicants will receive an update automatically via SMS on the status of their application. With a strong loan branch transaction capability, customers can conveniently apply for a home loan at any of PSBank's 182 branches nationwide even if it is not their home branch.

What's more, PSBank is the first bank to offer fixed rates up to 25 years. Plus, non-clients may apply for a home loan at any of PSBank's 182 branches nationwide even if it is not their home branch.

"PSBank's TGIF campaign was created to address clients' needs for simple processes when applying for home loans as well as a faster loan over-the-counter credit decision on home loan applications. Our TGIF campaign was bestowed the 'Best Insight and Strategic Thinking' award during the 2nd Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) Awards (IMCEA)," PSBank President Pascual III. Garcia III said.

45 years
Metrobank

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
National Capital Region
[illegible]

NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATIONS FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMITS (AEPS)

Notice is hereby given that the following companies/employers have filed with this Regional Office applications for Alien Employment Permits:

Name and address of Company/Employer	Name of Foreign National	Position
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

Croatia ends Spain's win streak at 28

MADRID—ISMAEL COMMINGES' forfeit to a third straight defeat in Group A, winning 87-83 to avoid the former great home early from the European Championship along with Latvia, Czech Republic and Poland on Wednesday.

The culmination of the first phase marked an end to world champion Spain's 28-match unbeaten run in a dramatic 95-94 defeat to Croatia, while holder Carmen also lost, 61-52, to Russia.

The top three sides from the four sections move into two groups of six in the second phase, which starts in Madrid on Friday, with the results from the first three days carrying over.

Greece was into a brisk wall called Andrei Kirilenko as it lost the battle for the top spot in the group. The 2.00 meter Utah Jazz forward caught 17 rebounds and contributed 12 points.

In Palma de Mallorca, Slovenia Andersons crossed Lithuania to the top spot in Group C with an 84-80 win over Germany.

Reuters

BONDS

Bonds smashes No. 762

DENVER, COLORADO—BARRY Bonds, Pedro Feliz and Sergio Molina all homered as the San Francisco Giants snapped a four-game losing streak with a 5-3 win over the Colorado Rockies on Wednesday.

Bonds began the home run parade in the first inning, hitting his 762nd Major League baseball career home run off Rockies rookie starter Eladio Jimenez, giving the Giants a 1-0 lead.

The two-run blast was his 28th of the season as Jimenez became the 449th pitcher to surrender a homer to the all-time leader. The home run was Bonds' first since August 24 against the Milwaukee Brewers.

Ex-Ateneo cager debuts for US Div. I five Nov. 22

AGUILAR

By Jasmine W. Paya

JAPETO AGUILAR, the first Philippine-born player to sign up with a US NCAA Division I squad, will debut with the Western Kentucky University Hilltoppers in a nationally televised game.

Aguilar—the former Ateneo Blue Eagles center who sat it out for a year due to a US NCAA transfer rule—will see action when the Hilltoppers battle Gonzaga in the 2007 Cotto Subway Great Alaska Shootout.

The 30th annual Shootout is one of the NCAA's premier early-season events and will be aired on ESPN U on Nov. 22.

The 6-foot-9 Aguilar already made an impression when he ruled the university's slam dunk contest last October.

The 20-year-old Pampanga native led to Hooks during his sophomore year in the UAAP before taking a crack at the US collegiate cage scene.

Aguilar, who posted a career high scoring marks with 16 points, helped power the Blue Eagles to a Final Four stint in the 2006 UAAP men's basketball tournament.

The son of former PBA cager Peter Aguilar has two years of eligibility left in the US NCAA. His father, a 6-6 center-forward, played for five seasons, starting in 1989, for five teams—Alaska, Shell, Swift, Sta. Lucia and Shell.

JELENA Jankovic returns a shot to Venus Williams.

Federer tames Roddick anew

NEW YORK—FOR TWO STILL ALMOST Roger Federer at the US Open, Andy Roddick was very good, quite possibly as good to be outclassed.

Yet, impressive results and what did all of that superb play Wednesday night earn Roddick? A date with defeat and, more specifically, a 7-6 (3), 7-6 (4), 6-3 loss in the US Open quarterfinals, a tentative two earlier than Roddick is accustomed to succumbing to Federer.

And accustomed, Roddick most certainly is, dropping to 1-14 against the man who replaced him at No. 1 in the rankings 234 years ago and has been here since.

"I mean, I'm not walking off with any questions in my head this time. I'm not walking with my head down," Roddick said. "I played the right way."

Federer, though, reached his record 14th consecutive semifinal thanks in part by being barely better in each tiebreaker.

In his win Venus Williams earlier Wednesday, which she came back from a set and a break down to push her quarterfinal against No. 5 Jelena Jankovic into a third set tiebreaker, Williams was solid over those decisive points, Jankovic was slightly shaken, and the American pulled out a 4-6, 6-1, 7-6 (4) victory to get back to the US Open semifinals for the first time since 2002.

Next up is a match against No. 1 Justine Henin.

US Open 'live' on Balls

AVD TOWNS HAS NOW HAVE that nice access to the US Open 2007 through the exclusive broadcast rights to Balls, SkyCable's Channel 33.

The 12 hours of the US Open coverage begins at 8 o'clock with six hours of the men's matches. It is immediately followed by the replay of the first six hours of the live broadcast. The matchmaks and the finals will be shown live on Sept. 8 to 10.

Instant replay for NBA

NEW YORK—THE NATIONAL BASKETball Association has agreed to allow officials to use instant replay for flagrant fouls and fights in 2007-08, the league announced Wednesday.

Recommended by the NBA's competition committee, the decision was approved last week in a vote by the league's board of governors.

The new ruling permits officials to review instant replays in order to determine the severity of a flagrant foul. Under current rules, a player ejected for a Flagrant Foul Penalty Two receives an automatic ejection.

Also, officials can turn to replay in order to sort out penalties following an on-court altercation.

AFP

PRE-SEASON

Ginebra takes on P'foods

GAME YESTERDAY
(ABC-Dos Cedro)
(x-x—Strategic Zamora vs Purefoods)

By Marvyn B. Cardilla

BEGINNING PHILIPPINE Cup champion Barangay Ginebra clash with Purefoods to take the lid off the PBA's 2007 pre-season entertainment to-morrow at the San Sebastian College gymnasium Center.

The Gin Kings and the Tender Juicy Cream, both with practically untouched rosters, tonight at 6 p.m.

Ginebra will welcome back Jaypee Belmonte and Mark Caguioa from national duty Bobby Raymundo will also rejoin Purefoods with James Yap, one of three players lost out from the 40-team.

Only Mark Escamillano been added to the Ginebra roster.

Purefoods, which did not pick anyone in the Draft, will also field Mike Pingris, who is back in shape after a career threatening knee injury.

Back-to-back NBA Test, with Asi Taulava, Jimmy Mason and Southern Marylander remaining, clashes with Air21 on Monday at the Ynares gym in Montalban.

SPORTS

UM returns to finals, shuts door on AMA

FRANK ROGUE JUST LOOKED UP TO SEE AGE PHENOMENA.

The 6-foot guard provided the endgame spark as University of Manila capped defending champion AMA, 80-79, yesterday and returned to the finals of the National Athletic Association of Schools, Colleges and Universities (Nasecu) basketball tournament at the San Juan gym.

Rogue, who hails from Tarlac, Tarlac, drilled in 11 of his 23 points, including four clutch pointers in the fourth quarter as the Manila squad broke right to face STI in the best-of-three championship series.

UM, winner of five straight titles from 2001 with a historic 93-game winning streak, and STI bagged their title playoffs at 4:00 pm. tomorrow at the Mapua-Jaguars Stadium.

The Manila will gun for their sixth title in the league just like their junior counterparts who will take on St. Clare in a rubber-match finale also tomorrow at 2 p.m.

"I hope this is a resurgence for UM," said UM's president Ernesto Delos Santos. "You have seen how much the players wanted to win."

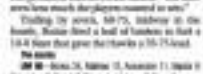
Trailing by seven, 68-75, midway in the fourth, Rogue fired a load of bombers to flash a 14-4 blaze that gave the hawks a 93-75 lead.

The scores:

JSF 80 – Reyes 28, Salitan 15, Acuzarra 11, Dizon 9, Gervacio 6, Pajarillo 5, Gonzales 3, Langit 2, Sison 0.

AMA 79 – Galang 20, Abat 15, Jabat 11, Lanot 6, Vargas 4, Alfonso 2, Mariano 2, Cabral 0.

Quarters: 15-17, 38-42, 68-63, 80-79 — **Box Score**



RP bets come to grief

Lack of Italian visa thwarts Lavandia, 3 others

By Marc Anthony Reyes

LAVANDIA

THEY TRAINED HARD FOR THE most part of the year in hopes of defending their martial titles...only to be told they have members to go.

The country's muckraked BoxErng ends hit by Gina Iniarra Penalosa and Rolando Lavandia entered a chance to compete in the biennial Mental Games in Indonesia, Italy after failing to get their visas from the Italian Embassy.

The sad episode left Lavandia, the Kitted Southeast Asian Games gold champion, in tears.

"We prepared eight months for this, training every day," said the 33-year old Lavandia, the two-time defending champion in the 69-69 age bracket.

(2003 in Puerto Rico and 2005 in Spain).

"In the end, we lose without getting sig ed fight."

The World Masters started Sept. 4 and will end on Sept. 11.

Penalosa was slated to vie for the heptathlon and hurdles titles, along with sprint legends Elena Sukolenzo and pole vaulter Emerson Obiena.

Lavandia said they applied for visa on Aug. 23 only to be told a week later that they needed to secure an invitation from the Italian Olympic Committee.

"That was only two days before our flight [Aug. 31]," said Lavandia.

The group sought the assistance of both the Philippine Sports Commission and the Philippine Olympic Committee to no avail.

Lavandia said that, contrary to the Italian Embassy's information, the Italian Olympic Committee does not have anything to do with the World Masters, a non-governmental sanctioning group for 35-years-and-older for women, and 40-and-older for men.

"It's painful for us because we prepared for it like we were still in the tournament," said Lavandia. "It's sad because we lose only because we don't have a visa."

De Leon itching for Peñalosa rematch

BOCCIA DANIEL PONCE DE LEON wants a rematch with Garry Peñalosa to prove his previous win over Ther Ospina would champion was no fluke.

In a press interview with Philippine Philippines," De Leon said. "I am confident of beating Peñalosa anywhere."

De Leon defeated the WBO bantamweight title by a controversial split decision over Peñalosa last March 17.

The Mindanao-based ex-a sensational first-round knockout of Ray "Boom Boom" Bautista in last month's PRIDE

Cup in Sacramento, California.

Peñalosa, who won the WBO bantam title at his native yard with a 17th-round knockout of Jhonny Gonzales, said he already has a package for him to fly De Leon.

"I know he is bigger than me, but I want to fight him again," said Peñalosa. Salvosa L. Jaguimitbay, Contributor

PSC official Montemayor on way out?

By Jane Manaloto

LEON MONTEMAYOR IS ON HIS WAY out as commissioner of the Philippine Sports Commission.

A reliable PSC source yesterday said President Macapagal-Arroyo has accepted the country resignation of Montemayor in line with a Malacañang plan to revamp the government sports agency.

The source added that the services of another commissioner would be terminated to the detriment to name the official.

Montemayor is in charge of the PSC's program development projects.

The other commissioners are Jumbo Go Da Lata Jose Morales and Ritchie Fortuna, who also served as commissioner during President Estrada's term and was reappointed in 2005 along with Morales.

PSC chief William "Butch" Ramirez is in doubt as reinstated in 2001 before being appointed chair in 2005.

Ramirez did not confirm or deny the acceptance of Montemayor's resignation.

All PSC officials tendered courtesy resignations following a recent decision by the President to review the performance of government officials.

Blue Eagles overwhelm Maroons

From page A19

killing" said coach Joe Lipa, noting that he remains aware of calls for his ouster as early as the Maroons' second loss. "We are just playing bad and we are losing bad.

"I heard that a lot of people are asking for me head," added Lipa, who had a "hand-shake agreement" to oversee the Maroons until 2008. "When I decided to coach UP again, I have to say here the limited and which paid for the university."

In the second game, the National University Bulldogs kept their slim semifinal hopes alive with a 68-57 triumph over the Adamson Falcons.

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US crisis seen lifting bonds, stunting stocks

Visiting Lehman execs warn of worsening credit crunch

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE WORLD IS NOT LIKELY TO SEE THE END OF THE US housing slump any time soon, and this could cause spell disaster for stocks but open up some opportunities in bond markets, visiting officials of leading US investment bank Lehman Brothers said.

"I think the housing issue will be here for several years in the US and that could lead to lower growth in the US. I will be more concerned with the equities markets than the bond markets," said Hui Kiat, senior vice president at Lehman handling mortgage-backed securities trading.

"I would think if the macroeconomic environment is not liquid in the US, it will probably be a good time to be in bonds where you're maximizing the spread," Kiat said Wednesday night at a forum with the Foundation for Economic Freedom.

In his presentation on the subprime crisis, Kiat said the bottom of the US

45 years
Metrobank
At 45: A fresh perspective on banking leadership

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"As a matter of fact, Metrobank consistently makes to the list of global consulting firm Watson Wyatt Worldwide Inc. in terms of good performance of retirement funds for the last five years," according to Josie Sulit, head of Trust Banking Group.

Sulit says as an added value to good financial returns, Metrobank's trust products are delivered through efficient and streamlined processes that pose a premium on client's time. Likewise, Metrobank trust officers are providing client services characterized by nurturing client relationships and promoting loyalty, thus clients

leave the bank with good memories.

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A little surprise in your electric bills

SOON WE MAY ALL SUFFER THE pain from rate piles flying at the MERALCO.

That's the "wholesale electricity spot market," our version of the bidding-type free market for power, which caught the headlines last week due to a scandal-cum-alleged price manipulation.

Now word is out that we may soon see an increase of about P2 per KWH on our electric bills.

It is the result of the MERALCO's price charges last year.

At that time, Napocor president Cyril del Callar was caught with a computer-printing letter to PSALM Corp., "urging" Del Callar's "award" to re-open talks with Napocor on the prices they would offer in the WESM.

Business-cited tool, noting that it was one-and-one price manipulation.

In no time, indeed, prices at the WESM went from P2.80 to P6.00 per kWh, for a more than double P4 per kWh rate hike.

After an investigation, the Energy Regulatory Commission concluded that Del Callar's letter was "well, "inappropriate."

And that was it, folks! For something as obvious as "price manipulation," that was about Del Callar got... no crappy result.

Of course the ERC warned Del Callar and Napocor about doing such things in the future.

Still, it was all just a soft slap in the wrist. Look, me, Del Callar is still Napocor president!

And no one, about a year later after the, "inappropriate" price manipulation at the WESM, we all must bear the brunt with that P2 per kwh increase in our electric bills.

BREAKTIME

Comrade V. Bakal II

Somebody else did wrong; we only do the punishment. Sir!

* * *

Sounding the alarm on the imperial, big power rate increase was actually Bukidnon Rep. Teodoro Casiño on EO.

By the way, Casiño also said that what Del Callar and company did, well, actually was a crime.

Do I take it that, under this administration, crime does pay?

Anyway, on top of the forthcoming P2 per kWh increase due the WESM price hikes last year, Napocor is asking the ERC for a 15-centavo per kWh increase next month.

In essence, Napocor said something about "delayed fuel recovery adjustments." It's a complex issue, "we're losing things under the earth," I am not sure.

Outrageous estimates due: Napocor stands to collect some P6 billion more due to the price-fixing bonanza from last year.

Thus, he said that the ERC should reject the petition for the new increase from the power-generating companies that were involved in the WESM price manipulations.

There were all nine-owned of course.

It only highlights the real problem in the power sector, which is none other than the monopoly Napocor, still controlling some 60 percent of the country's power-generating capacity.

That's why the law known as Epira says Napocor is to unload its clubs on the power sector by selling its plants and remaining, at most, 30 percent of the country's total capacity.

That's why Napocor is supposed to go to hell. The Napocor mafia is working hard to unload the law. They are getting support from the kids at the Palace.

Meantime, our electricity bills keep on rising. Emeril!

* * *

And since that's how they behave upstairs in the power sector, we cannot expect any less from the power distributors.

For instance, there seems to be trouble in the country's biggest electric co-op, the Batangas II Electric Cooperative, or Batelec II, covering some 11 municipalities and two cities in the province, with monthly sales of P340 million.

It is a P75-million trouble, at that!

The municipal-owned franchise consumers of Batelec II covering Lipa and Tanauan are complaining about its P75-million deal with a little corporate lawyer as "Lucio" for the co-op's computerization.

Really what business does an electric co-op have spending 95% million for computers? Is it free and fantastic? Is it into the distribution business—or retail—science.

Anyway, we report and that the president of the Batelec II board at the time of the P75-million computer deal was Reynaldo Panganiban, a prominent who owns the "junior hour" for the Manila Bulletin.

The new board, installed by the big, which is none other than the monopoly Napocor, still controlling some 60 percent of the country's power-generating capacity.

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The new board, installed by the big...

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Look for Mr. Charlie Alvarez, Ms. Hazel Guerra, or Ms. Shelly Enriquez

US crisis seen lifting bonds, stunting stocks

From page B1

housing market might not be low yet, warning of more defaults and foreclosures to come.

The credit crunch in the US is caused by rising delinquencies in subprime mortgages or housing loans given to borrowers with imperfect or limited credit histories and little equity. The ripples have spread across the globe as western banks took big hits from structured financial products with underlying assets contained no closer sub-prime mortgages.

Jun Ribaglit, Lehman vice president, added that the global turmoil would widen Philippine credit spreads, which means investors will demand a higher premium for holding on to closer sovereign debt papers.

"It's no secret that the credit market is still pretty tight as the pressure for it to widen is reasonable but I don't think it will be a direct result of a direct rate," Ribaglit said.

In the US, Kim explained that banks will now tighten their lending underwriting criteria, which in turn could depress volumes by 15 percent.

"With the size of the mortgage market, expect negative headlines to continue," Kim said.

Apart from the subprime mortgage market, that also noted significant credit deterioration in the rated riskier mortgage market, the so-called alternative-A or "Alt-A."

Alt-A mortgages is a loan to a rated-A borrower but there may be some underwriting standard that the borrower failed, such as incomplete documentation.

But he noted that the worsening collateral deliquencies was almost seven times more than Alt-A backed credit.

About 48 percent of the risk in the system was held by banks and non-agency dealers.

"Losses will be sizeable and spread out but could increase with refinancing troubles," Kim said.

In the end, he said that all eyes now were on the US Federal Reserve and the macroeconomic effects.

"The market is now pricing a two-thirds chance of a rate cut by the end of the year, but appears to be moving in between liquidity of the system, without lowering fed funds [rate]," he said.

He calms the global financial market isn't as bad as it might seem. Despite the problems in the mortgages, the US central bank has already lowered its key discount rate by half a percentage point to 5.75 percent but kept its fed funds rate, the more significant interest rate benchmark, at 5.25 percent.

The Fed funds rate are the benchmark that banks use for short-term loans from one another while the discount rate covers only the rate at which the Fed lends out to banks.

Metrobank at 45: A fresh perspective on banking leadership

From page B1

ment, and long term commitment. Trust clients enjoy the services of a dedicated fund manager and a personalized portfolio leadership strategy.

Metrobank's top trust products include a pioneering Corporate Stewardship Program that promotes various employee benefits tailored by companies to their employees. An off-the-shelf package, it is a comprehensive employee benefit program that provides a complete set up process and a spectrum of products, such as basic and expanded retirement plans, provident plan, other employee benefit plans, savings and loan plan, discounts from Manila Doctors Hospital, Metrobank credit cards, and tuition fee savings.

Built upon Metrobank will launch this month the Metrobank Evolution, a wealth management program that provides, one-to-one, financial service that is customized for high net individuals. The program is the one-stop shop of affluent individuals and their families in a personalized and specialized manner.

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At Metrobank, investing is easy. Engaging a financial worth your while and money as the country's largest bank makes sure that investing practices and financial solutions have one thing to achieve: clients' expectations.

Fernand Antonio Tarangco, head of Treasury Group says Metrobank's product portfolio is client oriented and client driven. The client is at the heart of Metrobank's innovation which touch the boundaries of investment opportunities to provide results and returns.

"Alongside the growth of the Philippine economy, Metrobank is maximizing opportunities in the market right now, resulting in strong transaction volumes and happy investors," says Tarangco.

Pairing for balance sheet efficiencies and better investment hedging and risk management, bringing better solutions to meeting investment opportunities, and consistently improving products to fit clients' needs. Metrobank is on top of the game as the best bank to offer treasury products.

To better improve Metrobank's product suite, Tarangco says the bank will soon implement the Office Plus, which will not only cover traditional treasury products but also interest rate derivatives, foreign exchange swaps, and other structured derivatives to provide clients all services for investment growth.

Making dreams come true for the OFWs

For a better life for their families here, the overseas Filipino workers found in foreign homes, factories and offices to support loved ones left behind - wife, husband, parent, and children. The OFW segment, every single individual of them found in every corner of the world deserves more than just being labeled the new heroes of the country.

Metrobank recognizes the struggle and hard work of the OFWs in making their families receive dreams and acquire better lives by consistently sending its services abroad in order to the burgeoning needs of the OFW segment, which currently account for 8.7 million Filipinos.

The new offices are set up in California to further strengthen Metrobank's presence in the Americas. Metrobank has likewise established partnerships with remittance centers in the Middle East to make the bank's remittance services more readily accessible to its clients everywhere.

Metrobank goes beyond remittance services by also providing OFWs the opportunities to uplift their living conditions, like acquiring a new house, car and other consumer loan services.

Metrobank has also established a social initiative to the OFW by partnering with the government through the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, the Department of Labor and Employment, Overseas Workers Welfare Administration and the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration to provide financial literacy programs to help these workers manage their hard-earned funds.

As to remittance service, Metrobank offers the World Cash Card, a unique ATM card that allows beneficiaries of OFWs to get remittances in cash and more conveniently through over 7,000 ATMs in the Philippines and over a million Cirrus-Maestro ATMs worldwide.

"Metrobank values the new heroes very highly" says Ramon Aquino, Head of International Offices and Subsidiaries Group. "The bank has undertaken many initiatives to make sure OFW remittances are received real-time, on-line by the beneficiaries."

Growth for the Middle Market

The wheels of growth for the middle market segment are on a constant roll on a road paved with an exciting future. Thanks in large part to the growing Philippine economy, the sales indicators reflect expanding income and spending of consumers, which in turn translates to expanding small to medium enterprises.

Credit also goes to banks like Metrobank, which has created suitable products to the middle market segment and consequently established rewarding relationships with them, poised to push and expand further economic growth in the country.

The biggest bank in the country recognizes the value and the role of the middle market in driving the economy. Delivering recent growth in corporate lending in 2006, Metrobank will continue to expand its market reach to the small to medium scale enterprises extending to robust Chinese businesses.

With a renewed focus on the middle market, Metrobank has reorganized its Corporate Banking Group by forming new customer divisions and invigorating the marketing side. The strategy allowed for better understanding of clients' distinct business requirements and more customized offerings that would match those requirements. As a result, a total of P28 billion in new loans were booked with 150 top-tier companies in 2006.

"What will really drive the country's economy is the middle market, so it has done its other Asian countries," says Dib Dans, Jr., head of Corporate Banking Group. "This is where the growth will come from. As Metrobank is looking at establishing a long-term relationship with the segment."

A strengthened franchise

As the Bank celebrates its 45th year of service to the Filipinos, Metrobank continues to improve its product offerings and assist quality, increasing cross-selling activities within the Group to leverage on product diversity and distribution reach. With a firm take on banking leadership, the bank will strengthen its franchise with a new corporate logo that signals a banker ready to meet the changing needs of the various markets it serves. Metrobank begins ahead with renewed strength and vigor, dedicated to its brand promise of keeping clients and the rest of its stakeholders in good hands.

9 fund managers vie for GSIS deal

By Michelle V. Ramos

NINE FOREIGN FUND MANAGERS have expressed interest to become a global asset manager of the government Service Insurance System.

These institutions that will present their proposals to the GSIS are BNP Paribas, Credit Agricole, Credit Suisse, Deutsche Asset Management, ING Investment Management, Northern Trust, Pacific Investment Management Co., Goldman Sachs and Society Generale.

GSIS plans to get two to three managers to invest $1 billion of its assets on the international investment market.

GSIS president and general manager Winston Garcia said it was prudent to invest a portion of the GSIS' assets abroad to further boost its income-generating potential.

"The strategy aims to diversify risks on our investments, maintain consistently high investment yields and put into practice good corporate governance over our investments," Garcia said in a statement.

As of December 2006, GSIS has $411.2 billion in assets, $44.2 billion or 12 percent higher than the $367 billion recorded in 2005.

The GSIS formally launched its selection process for fund managers two months ago.

"The response of the global investing community was overwhelming," Garcia said.

The $1 billion that GSIS plans to invest overseas comprises a small portion of its total assets. GSIS said the bulk of its assets will remain invested in the domestic market.

GSIS invests mainly in equities and government securities. Garcia, however, had said that GSIS also plans to increase its investments in the real estate business, such as by buying an idle asset and developing it into a residential, commercial zone to increase investments.

GSIS net operating revenues stood at P92.56 billion last year, up 4 percent from 2005.

The increase in its income was partly attributed to higher yields on investments.

Choosing the right investment instruments was therefore crucial to ensuring good returns, he said.

GSIS also said its objective in investing offshore was to generate a consistent stream of at least 8 percent over the next three years.

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Investment Funds	Current Value (September 04, 2007)	Last Week (August 31, 2007)
Bond Fund - Peso	1.551 83	1.55028
Managed Fund - Peso	1.66351	1.66073
Growth Fund - Peso	1.76898	1.77163
Bond Fund - US Dollar	1.3797	1.3848

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Investment Funds of Wealth Builder & Wealth Secure

	Unit Prices as of	
	Sept. 3, 2007	August 24, 2007
Fixed Income Fund	1.376893	1.375433
Balanced Fund	1.443624	1.413368
Equity Fund	1.734372	1.663081

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Investment	Interest Rate
₱ 50,00 - 999,999	5.75%
₱ 1,000,000 - 4,999,999	6.00%
₱ 5,000,000 - up	6.25%

Book of Commerce

Malaysian firm starts drilling

By Abigail L. Hu

PETRONAS CARIGALI SDN BHD OF Malaysia has started drilling its first well off Mindoro.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange yesterday, PNOC Exploration Corp. exploration manager Raymundo Eurella said that as of Sept. 4, the drilling of the well in Service Contract 47 had already reached a depth of 640 meters.

Petronas holds the majority of SC 47 at 88 percent, while PNOC-EC holds a 19.4-percent stake. PetroEnergy Resources Corp. has a 9.4 percent share while Basic Petroleum Inc. has 6.2 percent.

Earlier in the year, the SC 47 consortium said an exploration well would be drilled within the Recto Prospect, formerly Cherry Prospect, off Mindoro.

The proposed well, or Recto 1, would be drilled to a depth of 3,500 meters.

The prospect has an estimated resource of around 216 million barrels of oil.

SC 47 covers an almost 1.5-million-hectare area off Mindoro, which contains the Tobdas and Recto prospects.

The drilling program is expected to cost $63 million.

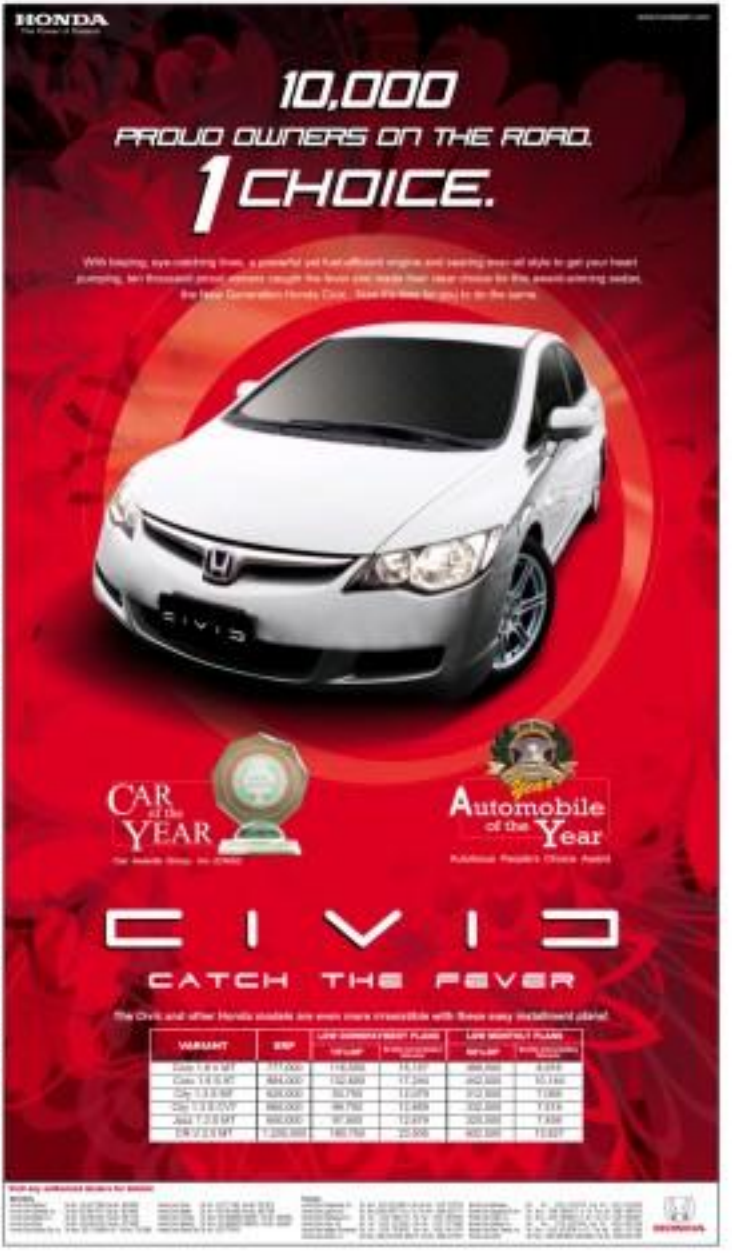
Last week, the Department of Energy said it would soon begin negotiations with South China Resources Inc. and Pilkin Petroleum Ltd. for the possible award of a service contract for oil and gas exploration, also off Mindoro.

In addition to Pilkin Petroleum country manager Christopher Jackson, Energy Undersecretary Guillermo Chiño said that following the evaluation of two proposals submitted for that petroleum block, the South China-Pilkin proposal was chosen for negotiation.

"After a thorough evaluation of your financial, legal and technical qualifications, we are happy to inform you that we have selected your submitted proposal, together with South China Resources Inc., for a petroleum service contract in Area 4 under the Philippine Energy Contracting Round 1(2005)," the letter stated.

"Two proposals were received for Area 4. We evaluated both proponents on the same criteria and found your proposal meeting penalty considerations. In this regard, the DOE negotiating panel will notify you regarding the schedule of the commencement of negotiations to work out a mutually acceptable service contract," it added.

Area 4 under the DOE's PECR-1 covers approximately 1.16 million hectares in the Cuyo, Mindoro, Tasa Palawan region.



SMC consolidates food units under San Miguel Pure Foods

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lazaro

SAN MIGUEL CORP. (SMC) is consolidating all its food businesses under San Miguel Pure Foods Co. Inc.

San Miguel Pure Foods is seeking regulatory approval to increase its capital to P1.46 billion from P883 million to cover a share swap with the parent firm.

In a filing with the Securities and Exchange Commission, San Miguel Pure Foods said SMC has subscribed to 44.41 million A-shares and 17 million B-shares of the increased capital. SMC has also subscribed to 3.66 million A-shares and 8.36 million B-shares out of San Miguel Pure Foods' unissued capital stock.

The subscription will be paid in the form of shares to SMC under Magnolia Inc., Monterey Foods Corp. and San Miguel Foods Inc. worth a combined P439 billion based on book value as of Sept. 30, 2006.

SMC chief finance officer Ferdinand Constantino earlier said that the proposed transaction is an attempt at rationalizing the corporate structure across SMC's different divisions and operating business units.

"Upon completion of the transaction, the Arthurian SMC food businesses will now be under SMPFC. This will also simplify financial reporting," Constantino said.

After the transaction, SMC's ownership in San Miguel Pure Foods will increase to 99.92 percent from 99.80 percent. San Miguel Pure Foods will, in turn, own 100 percent of SMFI and Magnolia, and 99.99 percent of Monterey, the company said in a number disclosure.

At the same time, newly incorporated beer manufacturing subsidiary San Miguel Brewery is also seeking SEC approval to raise its capital to P95 billion from P10 million.

The total P85 billion capital will consist of 250 million shares with a par value of P300.

SMC has subscribed 283.98 million shares worth roughly P71.3 billion of San Miguel Brewery, paying the subscription by assigning its 16 per cent San Miguel Brewery common stock in the domestic beer business.

Meanwhile, Arthaj Asset Fund Ltd., an investment fund managed by Singapore-based arthaj Partners, said it has acquired a 5.24-percent stake in the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE).

Shares close lower on Wall St. slide

STOCK PRICES CLOSED 0.54 PERcent lower yesterday, pulled down by the sharp losses on Wall Street overnight where hopes of no interest rate cut are fading, dealers said.

They said, however, that last-minute buying in index leader Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. (PLDT) gave the market some support.

The composite index fell 33.02 points to 3,830.53 off the day's low of 3,789.80. Volume amounted to 3.7 billion shares worth P3.5 billion. There were 86 decliners and 41 gainers, while 50 issues were unchanged.

The all-share index fell 14.02 points to 2,115.54.

"Investors are unlikely to make aggressive moves ahead of the FOMC meeting. The Fed has given no assurance that it will slash interest rates despite readers' expectation of a 100-bp cut soon," said Asiaconsult Castillo-Laman Tan Pamintuan Advisors Inc. Executive Director Jose Ma. Luis Montinola.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average fell more than 146 points on Wednesday as weak home sales data prompted investors to unload stocks.

"Investors are valuing a defensive position because of the uncertainty in the US," said Nomer Agulto of DA Market Securities.

"We can't agree with people saying we may be able to decouple from the US because of our good economic fundamentals. We share the same neighbor and as goes the neighborhood, so goes the house," he said.

Ayala Land Inc. was a key drag on the composite index, down 25 centavos at P14 after Wednesday's modest gains.

Manila Electric Co. (Meralco) also retreated after a sharp rebound on Wednesday that followed a two-day sell-off. The stock fell P2 to P81.

PLDT extended its gains after recent losses, advancing P18 to P2,750, a two-month high. AFP

When Plastic Is Better Than Paper: Using Your Credit Card to Save Money

Surprising but true - if you're one of those people who pay cash for your purchases, you could very well be spending instead of saving more.

Used wisely, a credit card offers rewards and rebates that can help you save more money and get better value versus paying in cash. As an example, HSBC credit cardholders get a 3% rebate for using their credit cards at Caltex gas stations. Given the high cost of gas nowadays, the amount saved with the rebate can be as much as a full tank's worth of gas in a year.

Using your credit card instead of cash can help you save money in many other ways. Some more pesos-maximizing tips:

Use your credit card to accumulate travel miles. Cards such as the HSBC Malaysia Miles Visa allow you to accumulate free miles each time you spend. Get 1 mile for every P45 spent, and before you know it, you have enough miles to exchange for a free Philippine Airlines ticket for your next vacation.

Be on the lookout for low-interest balance transfer deals. Balance transfer offers such as HSBC's Zero Interest Deal allow you to transfer your outstanding balance from another credit card at zero interest while enjoying flexible monthly payments. By refinancing your outstanding credit card balance, you can save a lot on credit card interest payments.

Do your homework. Read the literature that arrives with your credit card statements so you can find out and take advantage of special offers or promos, particularly when buying big-ticket items. A large number of merchants allow HSBC cardholders to purchase items on installment for up to 24 months at 0% interest, with some establishments offering the added bonus of double or triple miles on your card spend.

Always ask. Sometimes, establishments forget to let customers know about special deals offered with credit card tie-ups. Always ask the attending staff before you pay. If you can avail of discounts or giveaways on your credit card.

Of course, while using your credit card can help save you money, abusing your credit card is another story, and a costly one at that. To avoid the perils of irresponsible credit card use, take note of the following:

Don't overspend. Just because it's plastic doesn't mean it isn't real. Shop carefully and don't spend more than you can afford.

Keep track of your spending. Save copies of sales slips and compare them with your billing statement. If there are any discrepancies, report them immediately to your credit card company.

Pay your bills promptly. Even if you don't pay off your entire balance, make sure you pay at least the minimum on time. This helps you avoid late penalties and allows you to maintain a good credit record. Know when your due date is, and call your credit card company if your billing statement doesn't arrive on time.

Protect yourself from fraud. Sign new cards immediately. Don't lend your credit card to anyone - even friends and family. Don't give out your credit card information to unauthorized personnel. Call your credit card company immediately if your card is lost or stolen.

Credit cards provide convenience, security and savings. Use them wisely, and you too will see that plastic can truly be better than paper. For more on responsible credit, visit the website http://www.hsbc.com.ph/privcse/default.htm

Exports of coco products down

By Amy R. Remo

EXPORTS OF MAJOR COCONUT-based products fell 23.6 percent in the first seven months of the year despite the gains in July, industry data showed.

Exports as of July reached only 828,933 metric tons in copra terms, down from last year's 1.25 million metric tons, according to preliminary data from the United Coconut Associations of the Philippines.

Exports of most product categories fell during the period.

Coconut oil was down 38 percent year-on-year to 402,449 metric tons; copra meal by 41 percent to 259,171 metric tons; and desiccated coconut, by 8 percent to 71,790 metric tons.

Only oleochemicals headed the trend with exports increasing by 28 percent to 79,161 metric tons from last year's 61,887 metric tons.

July exports, meanwhile, stood at 153,282 metric tons in copra terms, up 16.6 percent from last year's 120,026 metric tons.

This was the first year-on-year growth recorded for 2007, according to Ecap.

Performance in July were in coconut oil and oleochemicals.

Coconut oil exports shot up in July by 20.7 percent to 77,660 metric tons from last year's 64,316 metric tons, while exports of oleochemicals as copra more than doubled to 18,020 metric tons from 7,215 metric tons last year.

Shipments of copra meal remained by 7.1 percent to 23,233 metric tons from 27,367 metric tons.

Dehydrated coconut, desiccated, sulfited basis delivery by 23.7 percent to 4,734 metric tons from 12,756 metric tons.

About 30 percent (43,426 metric tons) of coconut oil shipped out in July went to Europe while the United States absorbed 10.5 percent (20,078 metric tons).

5-star hotel to rise in Bonifacio

By Rowena W. Domingo

FORT BONIFACIO DEVELOPMENT CORP. said a property developer has agreed in principle to put up a five-star hotel worth as much as $200 million, according to the Bases Conversion Development Authority.

Placido L. Abaya, president of BCDA, which has a 45-percent stake in FBDC, said the planned hotel would help boost his agency's drive to encourage high-end tourism accommodation projects in the Bonifacio Global City.

Abaya declined to disclose the identity of the hotel developer, saying BCDA agreed to keep details confidential.

"We cannot talk about it for now, but the investment would range between $150 million and $250 million," he said.

"We expect more high-end development activities to come in because of a project like this," he added.

Also, Abaya said the construction of the St. Luke's Medical Center was in full swing and the hospital would be operational by 2009.

"St. Luke's would be a modern facility that would cater to local residents and people from all over the world," he added.

Other upcoming projects include an office building for business process outsourcing firms, with a gross floor area of 30,000 square meters.

A 31-story tower is also expected to be completed by 2010, following an FBDC pact with the Philippine Stock Exchange to put the PSE's two towers under one roof.

Further, Abaya said BCDA was stepping up its campaign to lure high-end development projects into the Bonifacio Global City as it expected completion of some projects by the end of the year.

Completed or ongoing residential projects include Serendra, Parkwood Heights, Symington, Bellagio, Fairways, South of Market, Fifth Avenue Place.

Office buildings, on the other hand, include Net Square, BHC Building, Manila Philippines' building, and the Singapore Chamber.

Abaya said the upswing in the real-estate industry was sustaining the rapid growth of development in Bonifacio Global City.

Other projects in the former military base involve retail developments like the Bonifacio High street, which is "on high gear, having completed seven buildings for retail tenants."

BCDA vice president Aileen Zosa said the agency was encouraging high-end projects such as hotels of at least five-star ratings.

Zosa said Chinn's real estate development giant Shanghai Shimao Group had expressed interest to develop a six-star hotel in the Bonifacio Global City.

Levi's Joins Consumers Choice Program

At a special ceremony on Aug 30 Asian Integrated Media (HK) Ltd (AIM) Executive Director, Victor Jeffery, announced that one of the worlds most famous icons, LEVI'S, has just joined the ever growing list of the top brands in the Philippines to become a 'Consumers Choice' recipient.

AIM works closely with global research agency Synovate to identify the Filipino consumers most preferred choice of brands based on "Trust', 'Quality' and 'Integrity'.

Foreigner as board chair

Raoul J. Fleischmann

by Filipinos.

Ownership

In addition, some of our laws require that a certain percentage of the capital of certain businesses be owned by Filipinos before a permit or license to operate can be issued by the regulatory authority.

These nationality requirements apply regardless of the kind of corporation, stock or non-stock, that may be formed for that purpose.

If the benchmark on allowable foreign ownership of the capital of allowed corporations is not complied with, the responsible parties, including the corporation itself, could face administrative fines and penalties under the Anti-Dummy Law.

In the case at hand, the SEC said that as long as the association or non-stock corporation does not intend to engage in a nationalized activity (or is owned by ownership limits), a foreigner can serve as its chair or be a member of its board of trustees.

The exposure of the joint-venture's members of the association and majority of the trustees are residents of the Philippines.

On the other hand, if the association engages in partly nationalized activities (or those that do not require full Filipino capital ownership), foreigners may sit in the board in proportion to their allowable membership in the organization under applicable laws.

In this particular situation, a foreigner may even assume the position of board chair as long as he is limited to presiding at board meetings.

On the basis of this explanation, the SEC advised the organizers of the proposed corporation to take a second look at its purposes/area of activity to determine their qualification for non-stock incorporation.

Comment. The activities that non-stock corporations or associations usually engage in to accomplish their social or charitable objectives include small scale lending, operation of skills training centers, recruitment for local or foreign employment, and organization of savings cooperatives (or "pahinguhan").

These activities are covered by varying nationality ownership requirements. To avoid delays in incorporation, it is advisable for organizers of non-stock corporations to check first with their lawyers on these benchmarks before they finalize their operational plans. (For feedback, please write to rpalafox@inquirer.com.ph.)

BCDA looking for temporary operator of SCTEx

Agency to talk with 3 groups vying for short-term contract

By Norma FM. Dominguez

THE BASES CONVERSION DEVELOPMENT Authority said it was preparing to negotiate with a possible "interim operator" of the Subic-Clark-Tarlac Expressway after competitive bidding for a 10-year contract failed twice.

Reuben L. Abaya, BCDA president and chief executive, told reporters the interim contract would be for six months up to a year.

"We would negotiate soon because we expect to open Balagtas 2 of the SCTEx within the year," Abaya said.

He was referring to the 41.27-kilometer Clark-Subic leg—a four-lane asphalt road—that would cut travel time from about five hours to about 50 minutes.

The 59-km Subic-Clark section, which is expected to cut travel time from two hours to 45 and a half hour, will be opened next year.

Abaya added that, following government policy, BCDA would be negotiating with at least three prospective temporary operators.

"BCDA would conduct a third bidding for the long-term contract," he said. "We want to get the SCTEx operating as smoothly as possible for motorists and to be environmentally-friendly traffic in Central Luzon."

However, construction work continued to be hounded by delays as the Japanese contractors have asked for extensions of deadlines for the completion of both sections.

Package 2 is supposed to be finished by October 2007 while Package 1 covering Bajhna-Diosdado JFK Engineering-Mitsubishi Heavy Industries-Asian Construction Integrated (JFK-MHI-ACI) has asked for a four-month extension, which means that the section would be completed by March 2008.

Abaya said the second bidding for the 10-year contract failed because the two bidders asked for a price that was above the set ceiling.

BCDA had set a ceiling bid of a 12.5 percent operator's share of toll fees collected within the 10-year contract period.

BCDA funds reflect the construction of the project through a P22-billion loan from the government of Japan through the Japan Bank for International Cooperation.

GOINGS-ON

Asian Spirit offers P10 flights

Asian Spirit offers P9.9+ flights to all local destinations in August's CEBU 9M-PHA Japanese Travel Mart (PTM) rental at the Regalia Hall of SM Megamall on Sept. 7-9, 2007.

The P10++ rate is for one-way economic flights of Asian Spirit and is exclusive of taxes.

The low rates valid for travel from Sept. 8 to Oct. 15, 2007 and is only available for bookings and buying on site at booths 2 & 3 of Asian Spirit during the PTM.

"Everyone is advised to book and buy early because of the expected influx of those existing local timetables of this rare kind," said Paul Chan, vice president of sales and market mgt. Adam Smith.

With the recent acquisition of 5 British Aerospace 146 JetLiners, the only jet to Caticlan, the company is able to cut travel time and increase passenger comfort.

Media interface at Club Filipino

The members of Society Responsible Travel and Tourism Practitioners—Asia (CSR-SMI Asia) will conduct a forum at Club Filipino on Sept. 8, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Focusing on members of the fourth estate, CSR-SMI Asia has invited print and broadcast journalists to attend the forum.

Manila Hotel president and exec. Sec. Jose Luis, who used to be a news anchor himself before he entered politics, said it is about time members of the media get the help that they deserve, allowing them to improve their standard of living.

According to our study, 17 percent of poor radio or writers in the country are paid just P5,000 per minimum wage—way below their counterparts in other Asian countries.

CSR-SMI Asia aims to help journalists by providing them with loans that have lower rates of interest compared to banks and other lending institutions, said Ben Sumonte, chairman/CSR-SMI Asia.

The event will be held at the UP Ayala Alumni in Diliman, Quezon City on Sept. 17.

Meat and fish seminar

Learn to cure meat and fish and earn extra cash.

The Golden Treasure Skills Development Program will conduct a seminar on meat and fish processing on Sept. 8, from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.

The one-day seminar will be held at Nonik Bldg., 28 Plaza Drive, Rockwell Center, Makati City.

Topics to be discussed are sourcing of materials and packing. For questions, please call 892-4226.

40 years on and still dishing out pleasures of travel

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

IT WAS THE JAPANESE WHO IN spired former Chief Justice Artemio V. Panganiban to put up Roma Travel Corp.

By invasion that they are, the Japanese have been coming to the Philippines in droves to enjoy the sun on weather, hit the beach or play a nice round of golf.

Thinking that the Philippines would continue to attract visitors from Asia's largest economy, Panganiban—who has invested in Roma in 1967 to give a slice of the pie in travel market and earn from tourists coming to the country.

Panganiban was also encouraged in part by a visit he made to himself when he had to give up a scholarship to Yale because he had no money to fly there. He made sure that his children would not have any problem flying.

Briefly 40 years later today Roma has grown from a seven-man operation in a small office on Padre Faura in Manila into one of the country's largest travel agencies that services not just the Japanese, but tourists and corporate travelers from all over the world.

The road to prosperity, however, was far from smooth.

Roma president and CEO Marilou F. Jandayan-Pajimago tells the Inquirer that, true to the nature of the volatile tourism industry, Roma has gone through many peaks and valleys over the past 40 years.

Pajimago, eldest of Panganiban's five children, relates how the travel industry is very sensitive to political and economic turmoil. The recent bout of trouble scares away visitors, as new closing periods of political upheaval.

That happened when Martial Law was declared in 1972, when Senator Benigno Aquino was assassinated in 1983, and when the masses held the People Power uprising in 1986. That same year, Pajimago was asked by her father to help him run the company.

She admits that, during her early years, she was just enjoying herself using the beauty of the Philippines and the top-rated destinations in the world while learning how to run the travel agency.

FEATURE

For my first three years, I was having the time of my life," Pajimago says. I went all over the world and all over the country. I was single and I did not need to handle any of the Roma risks."

At the time she joined, Roma has expanded into the inbound and outbound tourism market still. 100 employees. Her father now still leading the charge at the same time he was building a formidable law practice.

Little did Pajimago know then that she would be years away from following in her father's footsteps.

For sure, Pajimago had to bear the death of a husband in 1992 after just four years of marriage, leaving her with a young son.

When she remarried in 1995, she found herself alone handling the reins of Roma because her father was named to the Supreme Court. Thus, he had to leave the company in her young hands.

"My life changed because suddenly I wouldn't rely on him totally anymore," she says. "He was so busy and I was really on my own ... I really had to grow up."

Pajimago proved up to the challenge when she introduced the Philippine travel agency market to vacation cruises.

She learned about it during a travel exhibition in Germany and excitedly told her father about it when she came back to the Philippines.

While he did not share her enthusiasm at the start, he supported her decision for Roma to become the local agent of the Royal Caribbean Cruises at a time when the concept of cruising was still alien in Asia.

That proved to be a timely decision because cruise vacations came into vogue and the revenues there partly made up for the cut in airline ticket commissions.

Then, as fate would have it, Roma found itself in one state after another—the Sept. 11, 2001 bombing of the World Trade Center, the 2003 SARS epidemic in Asia, and the bird flu outbreak—that kept many travelers in their homes and firmly away from the tourist scene.

"That was a deep hole that the tourism industry fell into, we were lucky to manage to travel out of it," adds Pajimago, who admits her management skills were truly put to the test.

She cites three there as "the worst" ticket history.

At that time, long-haul travel disappeared from the market. The industry just relied on the few regional and corporate travels who braved the industry turbulence. The sudden drop in business took its toll on travel companies, even one as large as Roma.

Pajimago says she had to go to the extreme of letting go of 30 percent of the workforce in two months because there was just not enough business coming in to pay the salaries. She merged divisions, closed some offices and cut costs to the bone.

Still it was because Roma became a front and center travel agency that it managed to survive the crises.

"I just prayed a lot and hoped that the industry will hold together," Pajimago says. "I just kept on believing in the country."

She also put a little more faith in herself and in Roma's signature service, which made it a force to reckon with in the industry. That is one reason why Roma emerged from its challenges better than ever.

"Pajimago is not about to stop doing exactly that.

"I believe that my mission is to take Roma where I think my God would take it," she says.

In fact, a spirit.

VAPTANCCO

A Growing Culture of Impunity

We are appalled that the culture of impunity among certain government officials appears to have spread to an extent exceeding that of all past administrations. This impunity seems also increasingly evident in many agencies of government.

A glaring example is that of COMELEC Chairman Benjamin Abalos who had no business in allowing himself to be entertained by officials of ZTE Corporation, a potential contractor of the Republic, particularly considering he had an important electoral exercise to administer. His indiscreet conduct and absence from his official duties could only have happened if he believed he was immune from sanctions.
We therefore reiterate our call for Chairman Abalos to resign.

Dept. of Transportation and Communications Secretary Leandro Mendoza needs to think very carefully about the charges leveled against him by Congressman Carlos Padilla. Like other questionable projects, the ZTE deal will be rejected by the court of public opinion and, sooner or later, evaluated and ruled on by our own independent courts of law. Sec. Mendoza should prove his worth and rescind it now.

Should he choose not to do these, we would support a full investigation by the Senate of this highly questionable project given the huge expenditure of public funds involved. We also demand that the government publicly release a copy of the contract as mandated by Article III, Sec. 7 of our Constitution which states that *"The right of the people to information on matters of public concern shall be recognized."*

The secrecy about this project, despite repeated demands by the public, is contrary to the principle avowed by this Administration for complete transparency in matters of public interest and to the provisions of Republic Act 7925 which emphasizes that *"public telecommunications services shall be provided by private enterprises."*

We are heartened by the courage of journalists and fiscalizers who bring to light the anomalous activities of public officials who believe they are protected by their position. We join them and encourage others in expressing public outrage at these questionable acts and the growing culture of political impunity.

We call on President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo to heed our pleas and take immediate action to rectify blatant wrongdoings of public officials, lest she be accused of condoning them.

Management Association of the Philippines

Financial Executives Institute of the Philippines

Foundation for Economic Freedom, Inc.

7 September 2007

Petron, WWF seal pioneering strategic agreement to conserve Tubbataha Reef & the greater Sulu Sea

The country's leading oil refining and marketing company Petron Corporation recently signed a strategic agreement with the World Wide Fund (WWF) to further expand conservation efforts in the greater Sulu Sea, particularly in Tubbataha Reef-Southeast Asia's only UNESCO World Heritage Site. Petron will be committing up to P50-million over the next five years to fund programs aimed at improving livelihood, food security and sustainable coastal resource management in the municipality of Cagayancillo, which has jurisdiction over the reef.

"The sustainability and success of our business hinges on our actions as a responsible resident in every aspect of our business especially in the area of corporate citizenship," Chairman and CEO Nicasio I. Alcantara said. "This partnership with WWF will allow us to support livelihood programs that would improve the incomes of Cagayancillo residents and give them skills essential for the preservation of Tubbataha Reef."

The Petron-WWF partnership has two major components. One component establishes and expands marine-based livelihood opportunities for Cagayancillo residents. A second component provides the opportunity to build the skills of island residents and deserving college graduates from different academic institutions, to manage marine resources through an annual summer bursaries learning program. Additionally, this serves as a means to promote stronger ties among academic institutions, scientific and technical experts, industry partners, NGOs, and local government units.

"Petron's decision to make a meaningful investment to conserve and effectively manage Tubbataha - Reef-Southeast Asia's only UNESCO marine world heritage site-represents a significant private sector commitment to the people of Palawan, and to the Philippine environment in general," WWF-Philippines Vice Chairman Jose Ma. Lorenzo Tan said. "In light of the environmental challenges that face our country, private sector investments, in WWF's view, can provide the much needed impetus, and make all the difference in people's lives."

In partnership with stakeholders from Palawan and the national government, WWF has been playing an active role in managing the Tubbataha Reef over the past ten years. Its involvement includes the installation of resources to support the management and protection of marine biodiversity, enforcement efforts, the maintenance of high standards of biological research (e.g. corals, fish, seabirds) and thorough documentation of results - a requirement for sound management.

WWF-Philippines has been able to build and innovate on approaches to remain at the cutting edge of conservation work.

"The program represents Petron's long-term pledge to help restore the health and productivity of Philippine seas and ramp up both the social and economic gains for coastal communities," Nicasio I. Alcantara added. "The preservation of Tubbataha is essential to address food security for thousands of fisherfolk who depend on the bounty of the Sulu Sea."

Tubbataha reefs contribute immensely to the viability of coastal fisheries and food security. It has been scientifically established that the currents within the Sulu Sea transport large quantities of larvae from Tubbataha and Cagayancillo, towards the east coast of mainland Palawan, where they seed hundreds of hectares of coastal reefs in one of the country's most productive fishing grounds.

Researchers have recorded 396 species of corals - 85 per cent of all hard coral species in the entire Philippines. There are 479 species of fish in 40 families. Manta rays are frequent visitors to the reef as are barracudas and large schools of jacks. Tubbataha is also home to six species of sharks - usually found cruising around the outskirts of the reef. There are two types of sea turtles and nine species of marine mammals found in these reefs. The diversity of marine life found in Tubbataha is equal to or greater than any such reef of its size in the world.

PRESERVING A NATIONAL TREASURE
Petron Chairman and CEO Nicasio I. Alcantara (3rd from L) signed a memorandum of agreement with WWF-Philippines Chairman Jaime Augusto Zobel de Ayala to form a strategic partnership between Petron and WWF to preserve Tubbataha Reef, considered one of the richest marine ecosystems in the world. Also in the picture are Samsam Perez, President Khalid Jumtrona L.) D. Al-Fadagh and WWF-Philippines Vice Chairman Jose Ma. Lorenzo Tan.

STAUNCH SUPPORT
Petron Foundation Incorporated (PFI) Board of Trustees were in full force to support the strategic agreement with WWF to preserve Tubbataha Reef. In the picture are Petron officials (standing L to R) Corporate Secretary Luis Magbanua, Controller Emilio de Claro, VP-Finance Antonio Pelayo, VP-Legal Affairs Jose Laurel, VP-Corporate Planning Salahuddin Abdulain, VP-Marketing Joey Campos, VP-Supply and Operations Max Aznarez and PFI Executive Director Malu Sinsi. Also in the picture are (sitting L to R) former Petron President Khalid A. Fadagh, WWF-Philippine Chairman Augusto Jaime Zobel de Ayala, Petron Chairman Nicasio Alcantara and WWF-Philippines Vice Chairman Jose Ma. Lorenzo Tan.

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'Sweet spot' in a backpack

Skip Yowell, one of the founders of Jansport bags, finds passion and work fulfillment outside his office

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

AT FIRST GLANCE, SKIP YOWELL LOOKS like an American still very much living up to the 1960s, with his loose tie-dyed shirt, worn pair of jeans and beads and fibre-bracelet bands around the wrist.

But to dismiss the Kansas native as just another aging hippie will be catastrophic as the 63-year-old Yowell knows more about surviving a successful business and living life to the full than the average CEO in a designer suit cocooned in his executive corner office.

Yowell, after all, is one of the three original founders of Jansport, one of the world's biggest backpack brands.

He and his cousin Murray and his cousin's then girlfriend Jan—after whom the bag was named—made the company grow from a roaring operation in an uncle's two-story transmission shop into a global company that produces millions of backpacks each for the wear and tear of enjoying the outdoors.

Global ambassador

Jansport is celebrating its 40th year of production this year and although Yowell and his cofounders have sold the company to, a conglomerate, he still holds the title of vice-president of global public relations and the de facto global ambassador for the brand.

Life cannot be better for Yowell, who is literally still climbing mountains, the latest being Mt. Rainier in Washington.

And his kind of life is within everybody's reach, Yowell said in an interview during his recent visit to the Philippines.

All that it takes, he said, is for a person working hard to build a career or business to find his "sweet spot" and find the courage to stop there.

"There is always pressure for us to go for more and more. But do career individuals really enjoy what they are doing?" he asked.

Extra luggage

On the other hand, if a person has found his passion, he explained, there is no need to work hard for more. Everything else becomes unimportant.

"This might be the most important lesson of all: Quit climbing once you've found your career spot. Anything beyond that point is like lugging excess baggage," Yowell stressed.

"Many aspiring business types strive to become the Top Dog, the Head Honcho, or the Big Cheese. There's nothing inherently wrong with that. But if in your pursuit of the corner office, you discover that your true passion lies midway up the corporate ladder, stop climbing and enjoy what you've found," he said.

In Yowell's case, for instance, he gave up on the managerial offers for him to head the company.

The pay and the perks were bigger and better, of course, but Yowell said taking up the job would have meant he would no longer have as much time to go around the world to just talk about Jansport and the reasons why it is such a "true" brand to build.

Instead, he would be stuck in the office taking care of details of running a global company.

Besides, he has always been an outdoors person and he wants to stay there as often as possible.

Sharing

He also spends a good part of his time these days sharing what he has learned about business and life in general to aspiring entrepreneurs.

"TO LIVE a good life, all that it takes, Yowell said, is for a person working hard to build a career or business to find his "sweet spot" and find the courage to stop there.

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Get started on tomorrow

Pinoys love to relax by watching TV

By Arlyn R. Barrios

MOST FILIPINOS ARE TURNING TO free television as a main source of news, information and entertainment, a recent survey showed.

According to Synovate's Media Atlas survey, 92 percent of respondents from A, B, C and D classes have watched a free channel on television yesterday while only 43 percent have read a daily newspaper.

Only 46 percent had meanwhile watched a cable or satellite channel.

Watching television was found to be the most popular way for Filipinos to relax with 94 percent saying so, Synovate disclosed.

Other forms of relaxation include resting (59 percent), spending time with family (50 percent), listening to music (74 percent) and eating out, chatting with friends, listening to radio and shopping.

In the past seven days, only 43 percent have read a broadsheet newspaper while 79 percent had listened to a radio station, according to the survey.

Synovate's first Media Atlas survey was conducted within the Metropolitan and Greater Manila areas, from June 2006 to July 2007.

It primarily measures household media habits, spending patterns, product ownership, lifestyle, attitudes and values, especially across the expanding upper income groups.

A sample of 3,538 respondents, living in the Greater Manila Area aged 15 to 64 years old were polled using Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (Cati) and face-to-face interviews.

Cati defines the media habits of a media audience where telephone landline penetration is over 90 percent. The selected socioeconomic classes A, B and C+.

Face-to-face approach was applied across all surveyed areas to pick up the classes lesser C and D.

Synovate, however, did not provide reasons for preferences in network ownership, radio listenership and newspaper readership.

Favorite channels

Among the free channels, GMA 7 ranks highest with 49 percent from among A, B, C and D+ classes who said they have watched the local channel within the past seven days.

This was followed closely by ABS-CBN 2 at 43 percent, which is measurable the most preferred free channel among the affluent (A/B classes).

QTV 11 ranks third among preferred free channels with 44 percent viewership.

For radio, 57 percent of respondents preferred listening to FM station DZRH Love Radio (90.7 MHz), followed closely by 93.9 FM (101.1 MHz), which is preferred by 56 percent.

Among AM stations, 17 percent listened more to DZMM Radyo Patrol (630 Khz) while 13 percent preferred DZRH (666 Khz).

Broadsheet readership

For daily broadsheets, the Inquirer enjoys the top spot from Mondays to Saturdays with an average total readership (ABC) of 614,431.

This was followed closely by Manila Bulletin with an ABC of 585,696 while Star ranked third with an ABC of 466,597.

ABC is defined as the number of readers who, on average, read a copy of a particular title.

On Sundays, however, Manila Bulletin was seen to have the widest readership over with an ABC of about 1.19 million or a reach of 17 percent of the sample polled.

Inquirer's Monday edition follows with an ABC of 747,507 or an 11 percent reach while that has a 9 percent reach with an ABC of 655,894.

Among the affluent (A/B) which have household incomes of more than P50,000, 44 percent preferred the Inquirer, 38 percent read Manila Bulletin and 24 percent the Star.

Inquirer is also the most read paper among those who have cars, credit cards and other financial investments.

Among newspaper sections, the top three most important sections were front page, according to 61 percent of respondents; entertainment, 44 percent, and sports, 39 percent.

Notably however, Filipinos spend only a short time in reading a daily newspaper with 48 percent of respondents saying they read for less than 15 minutes, given today's increasingly fast-paced lifestyle.

About 30 percent said they spend 15 to 30 minutes a day to read a newspaper.

The survey also showed that 63 percent of those respondents read at home while 24 percent read in either their office or school.

JANESPORT has evolved to now-lines that conform to the head models.

'Sweet spot' in a backpack

From page B4-1

body willing to lend an ear and listen with an open mind.

The value of finding one's "sweet spot" is also expressed in Sowell's book own memoirs. "The Happy Guide to Climbing the Corporate Ladder and Other Misadventures," a fun and easy read that traces Janesport's growth and Sowell's thoughts on what really constitutes success.

For Sowell, there are measures of success other than reaching the top of a corporate ladder at the expense of others.

"To successfully ascend the ladder, you and I are told are must. Achievement or loss, are or be used and fight to stay at the top. While I don't go out of my way to criticize folks who operate within such a self-limiting mind-set, climbing the corporate ladder under those guidelines sees sounds like a downer," Sowell said.

Personal fulfillment

What Sowell puts forward as an alternative is for career and business types to take up a trade or a position that provides personal fulfillment, something "true" to their passion. Sowell considered how they work together better as a team," he said.

The accountant has allowed Janesport to evolve from its first line of patented frame packs to the new lines that conform to the latest trends.

Janesport, for instance, was first to 1996 to produce backpacks that were compatible with the ubiquitous iPod and other digital music players.

The line called the LivePlay series includes the Recourse, Smiths Pack and the Alt Pack equipped with Bluetooth connectivity.

Sowell said he does not know if his business philosophy came about because he grew up in the "summer of love" in the late 1960s during which "fun" and "peace" were said more often than "career."

He, however, believes that the principles that Janesport first stood for in 1967 of "peace, love and profit" are very much applicable today 40 years later, perhaps even more so.

NYREE at one of her successful outlets

FRUITAS has become one of the fastest growing franchise/businesses around.

Nyree Chan learns the best way to know consumers' wants is to man the business cart by herself

Youngest franchisee has eight outlets

ONE MIGHT SAY LIKE CORPORATE LIFE was nipped in the bud when Fruitas came with an opportunity for entrepreneurship.

And it didn't matter that she was young and had to get a business loan to be able to afford a franchise of one of the fastest growing franchise businesses around.

"I opened Fruitas and Buko ni Fruitas at SM Mall of Asia in May last year and I had no idea it was going to grow so fast," exclaimed Nyree Chan, one of the youngest Fruitas franchisees.

"Running a food stall business was something very new to me. After four years of working for a car distributor, a packing company and a call center, I am now blending fruit shakes for people from all walks of life in the middle of the country's biggest mall," she says, smiling.

Nyree tells all this with many a maze of vogue stylist voice even if it wasn't such a bed of roses during the first month of operations. For the crucial first 30 days, the expert management graduate personally manned the cart.

Best experience

"The best experience for me because I saw the ins and outs of a net business and I got an in-depth view of what people look for in terms of quality and service."

Nyree comes from a Filipino-Chinese family whose members are not afraid to get their hands dirtied.

Her father says that Nyree has an entrepreneurial streak and her track record of being responsible scored high with him. So with a little help from him and Lester Yu, the brains behind the Fruitas success, Nyree readily took on the entrepreneurial challenge.

"It helped that my father believed in me and that Lester was always on hand to listen, guide and give advice. It raised my level of confidence and I knew that as long I keep on doing the right thing and be open to other people's ideas and suggestions I will soon be able to get another Fruitas franchise in less than a few months."

True enough, her second Fruitas and Buko ni Fruitas carts rolled in at SM Manila Supermarket, followed by Buko ni Fruitas at SM Megamall Food Court in timely a year. Business was booming and there was no way to go but forward for Nyree.

Strike while the iron's hot

As the age-old business adage goes, the young woman is striking it while the iron is hot. The three franchise outlets were followed by a Juice Awesm kiosk at Glorietta 3, Buko ni Fruitas at Food Choices Glorietta 4, and two more Mango Farm carts at Robinsons Place Manila and SM Megamall Food Court.

"It's fortunate that Lester's operational support for his franchisees makes a lot of things easier for us. Every detail of the business is thought of and there is a system in place which enables franchisees like me to not worry about on-time deliveries and spoilage. He even comes to your rescue when a particular outlet needs routine inspection. Truth is you can call Lester for just about anything. That is a comforting thought for us, franchisees," Nyree says.

And even if she had seven franchise stalls, Nyree keeps it simple—she has her office inside her bedroom and has 11 staff to help her with the day-to-day operations.

Despite her busy schedule, Nyree still finds time to do what every young people her age enjoys doing. "I still love watching movies with my friends and going out to dinner with our friends."

Still somewhere in between the blockbuster movies, Nyree's eighth Fruitas franchise is already in the works.

JACK'S Loft interiors by Bohemian Gallery

ck's Loft reinvents the dessert café

WHEN YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS John Tan Seng and Rob Cua decided to put up Jack's Loft Dessert Bar in Greenwood City in 2016, they only wanted a place where they could unwind and have a nice cup of coffee and dessert, after tending to the branches of a Vietnamese noodle house.

Little did they know that, when they opened the bar, they would be constructing the dessert café concept in the country.

"The idea of Jack's Loft originated from the home loft of our cousin-in-law Jack Johnson in Canada, where we would hang around to have good food and nice chats but with friends," said Tan Seng, managing partner of the dessert bar. "So, when we put up restaurants in the Philippines, we decided to transplant this concept of the loft of Jack here."

Party concept

While the sensation of the self-coined "loft" in Manila, they encouraged us to discuss the party concept, this time with more prompt and convenience.

"We started with the traditional café concept with coffee and pastries, and light meals, and did not open until 6 p.m.," Tan Seng said. "But as party-type grew, we soon expanded our daily fare and operating hours."

This started with a handful of Italian food recipes, which today showcases delivered, to cater mainly to the younger set and the occasional crowd.

As its customers became more diverse in terms of age, Jack's Loft menu began to expand. It can now serve dozens of meals.

Current menu

Its current menu includes pastas (grilled chicken mushrooms, and chicken and wings, Italian-style bistro chicken with rice, Greek shepherd's pie, and Hong Kong-style baked pork chop, pasta, fried chicken (no steak) and melted rice.

For drinks, it has shwarma, Tagaytay beer, Iced shakes, and its popular house blend, Jack's, are flavoured as Jak bend.

Not to be outdone in its signature Jack's cheesecake and a slew of coffee cakes which have made the restaurant a successful location with sweet tooth.

Designer stores

Aside from its unique Italian food and desserts, Jack's Loft is also reputed for coming up with designer stores which Tan Seng and Cua developed themselves, using the former's academic training in graphic design courses.

Each outlet has a unique characteristic depending on the age group they want to...

Its first store in Eastwood City is an imposing post-modern restaurant and cafeteria.

As that restaurant Libis subway the store becomes a favorite haunt of regular and party-goers because of its relaxing ambience and comfy couches reminiscent of the house in Canada.

The second branch on Tomas Arnaiz, Greenhills has a more industrial look, while the third store in the Robinsons Galleria Mall provides diners with that "out-of-the-box" ambiance.

The other half of the outlet is Pho Hoa Vietnamese noodle restaurant, while the entire site has a Computer Internet station for internet and online gaming addicts.

Wi-Fi enabled

The restaurant is Wi-Fi enabled. It also has an enclosed play pen for toddlers and children, allowing their parents to have a quiet dinner.

Its latest store in The Block of 168 Shawkilkan Japanese City is the simplest and most compact, but modern of sorts.

With its relaxing and welcoming ambiance, customers are often tempted to stay and hang around a little longer than usual while enjoying dessert and coffee.

As part of its continuing expansion, Jack's Loft will open in the Ayala Triangle itself with the new range of Italian-style Pinoy lifestyle dishes.

"By venturing into the malls, we hope to capture the office crowd and a broader segment of the general public, which are beginning to appreciate a new cuisine and dining concept," Tan Seng says.

Asked on the secret of Jack's Loft's raising points, Tan Seng says, "good food, nice of hard work, excellent locations, a creative concept and a little touch of luck."

E-mail us at ...
Editor Arlen Espinosa

SM celebrates Bulacan's Singkaban Fiesta

BULACAN'S BEAUTY AND cultural heritage takes center stage as SM City Marilao joins in the celebration of the Singkaban Fiesta 2007 from Sep. 8 to 15.

The Singkaban Fiesta, which is derived from floating at Balitanque ng Bulacan, is a weeklong celebration of Bulacan's rich cultural heritage. Literally meaning bamboo raft, it is celebrated in line with the 109th anniversary of the Philippine Republic's First Congress, which took place on Sep. 15, 1898 at the Barasoain Church in Malolos.

Highlights of the annual event have included the Ati-Atihan sa Kalye, Bulacan's own version of street dancing, the Pandakilan Fireworks Display, and the Galeon at Lakambini ng Bulacan pageant. The event has also been a good time to showcase the products Bulacan has become famous for. Rosquillos, pliants and native delicacies like pasalias de leche, puto, and, pepit, as well as to honor outstanding Bulakenyos through its famed Parangal and Dangal ng Lipi Awards.

This year's theme, "Bagong Bulacan, Mala-Diwa, Mahusay at Makabuluhan, Maprogreso at Payapa sa Buong Mundo ng Pamilyang Bulakenyo," depicts modern Bulakenyos as stalwarts of strengths and values, just like the great heroes from the province Marcelo del Pilar, and Francisco Balagtas Baltazar.

Bulacan Governor Jonjon Mendoza and Vice Governor Willy Alvarado recently led the launching of the Singkaban Fiesta 2007 activities at SM City Marilao.

The mall has been the venue of many exciting Singkaban activities since 2004, and it again will be hosting key events this year. These include the Fireworks Display at the mall's parking lot 3 on Sep. 8, and the pre-opening screening of Lakas at Lakambini ng Bulacan contestants on Sep. 9.

Not to be missed are the Governor Jonjon Mendoza Rosal Open and the 1st Bulacan Statistik Competition on Sep. 10 and 11 at the mall's Event Center. There, look on hard-core patitistas (cooler cards), small statistik (mini) and statistik adapted for the province to suggest a name in return, which are often accompanied by human interchasing exhibits.

The Provincial Health Office will conduct the 2nd Bulacan Health Expo from Sep. 12 to 14, while a Retire Dog Grooming Seminar on Sep. 15 will be helpful to dog lovers.

Mall-goers are also participating in this year's Singkaban Float Competition on the last day of the festival. Accompanied by street dancing to Bulakan sa Kalye, they will take place at the provincial capitol in Malolos City.

TRIBUTE: Bulacan's Miss Golden Glaze for Singkaban's famous Ambalan sa Kalye.

P1-B CORPORATE BONDS

Sylvan Cruz recently topped SB Capital investment Corp.'s Security Bank Corp (SBC) subscribers as its most managed and underwritten for a P1.0-billion fixed-rate bonds. SBC Chairman Emeritus/Chairman Executive Committee Ricardo Leong (left) and Retirement Committee Chairman Alfredo Ramos (right) congratulate Sylvan Cruz (center) for topping the subscription. Also in photo are (from left) Emmanuel F. Manuzon, Sylvan Cruz's senior vice president and CFO; Reynold F. Gonzaga, SBC president and CEO; Wilfredo Fernandez, Ben Rosey T. Tupaz Jr., CEO Capital Investment Corporation; Oy Chee Ming, BCBC executive vice president; standing, from left Florencio L. Lubiano, BCBC senior vice president; Fernando Garcia, SB Capital Investment Corp executive vice president; Ma. Concepcion Lopez, SBC assistant vice president; Israel Abrigan, Pulmac Mac T. Dy, SBC senior vice president; Juanito Andres A. Herrera, BCBC vice president; Wilfredo S. Valentin, SBC first vice president and trust division head.

NBDB conducts First Academic Publishing Conference in RP

TO HELP ENCOURAGE THE DEVELOPMENT OF KNOWledge and authorship in the academic setting, especially in the regions, the National Book Development Board (NBDB), with the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), is holding an academic publishing conference-slash-"Developing Local Knowledge Through Academic Publishing" to be held on Sep. 18 at the Seamen International Conference Hall-Avenue, Ermita City, the day-long conference aims to help develop the publishing capabilities of academic institutions with university presses. Lectures on a wide array of topics will be delivered by speakers from the academe and experts in the industry.

Lectures on a wide array of topics will be delivered by speakers from the academe and experts in the industry, but the Philippines Inc. initiative gives an update on current trends in digital publishing. Simultaneous with the conference will be an exhibit of publications from academic presses to be held at the same venue. Interested parties may call the NBDB at 809-3017. Look for Jeanne Sulang.

Search for outstanding Philippine CFO continues

ING BANK NV MANILA BRANCH AND the Financial Executives Institute of the Philippines (Finex), the joint organizers of the search for the outstanding CFO of the Year, are calling on Philippine corporations to continue submitting nominations.

The organizers will accept entries until Sep. 15.

The CFO of the Year Award may be participated in by all local or foreign-owned, privately held or publicly listed companies operating in the Philippines and registered under the laws of the Philippines. Companies may be Philippine owned or the local subsidiary of multinational corporations operating in the Philippines.

The awards for the outstanding CFO of the Year recognizes Philippine financial services leaders and their achievements. The awarding ceremony, slated for Nov. 29, is the culmination of an extensive and nationwide seven-month search for the country's outstanding CFO.

The endeavor is a joint undertaking of the ING Retail Markets Research and Finex—a partnership that is backed by co-presenters and media partners.

Co-presenters are Finex Foundation, The International Association of Financial Executives Institute or IAFEI, Asian Institute of Management, Corporate Jose B. Fernandez Jr. Center for Banking and Finance, and the CPA Society of the Philippines. Media partners are Philippine Daily Inquirer, Philippine Star, and Business World.

The principal criterion criteria for the awards are based on the values of integrity, leadership, effective stewardship based on the highest standards of business and professional ethics, and specific measures of wealth creation in finance and financial services that are worthy of recognition.

More information about the CFO of the Year Award is available at www.finex.org.ph.

Novartis gears for BioCamp 2007

TOP POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS, experts and industry leaders in the fields of biotechnology and medical biotechnology from twenty countries in Asia will be in "Biotechnology Harvest" held at the Ben Pearson Hotel Hotel in Makati. The forum served as an excellent venue for information sharing and exchange on the state of biotechnology development in the country and a primer for the coming Novartis International Biotechnology Leadership Camp (BioCamp) 2007, which will be held from Oct. 6 to 8 in Tokyo, Japan.

BioCamp is an annual three-day biotechnology seminar for postgraduate students with high management and leadership potential in the said field of study. The seminar offers participants the chance to gain a broader view of the biotechnology sector and its benefits from a global perspective.

Pharmaceutical company Novartis started the biotechnology camp in 2000 as a way of giving back to the countries in which Novartis operates. The company believes that, "By educating talented young people about recent trends in the biotechnology industry and by promoting regional cooperation, we aim to contribute to the advancement of biotechnology worldwide." Novartis was named as the number one most admired pharmaceutical company in 2006 by Fortune Magazine.

Best camp 2007 will convene some 90 participants from all over the world, with one or two representatives from each country. For three days, top postgraduate students from various countries will be given the opportunity to interact with their peers and learn from biotechnology experts from the academe, the industry and government officials.

Speaking during the Biotechnology Forum, Novartis Philippines' commercial director for general medicine Raul Ichikhan said, "(BioCamp) stimulates biotechnology in the country," referring to how the event could strengthen its development in the Philippines through a healthy exchange of innovative ideas that should extend beyond borders and spread regionally and globally as well.

Two representatives will be chosen by Novartis among alumni of past graduate seminars from top universities in the country to participate in the international BioCamp 2007. According to Novartis, the selection of candidates will be based on "academic excellence, professional drive and leadership potential."

This year's forum is unique as Novartis has decided to invite not only academicians but also some experts and business majors as well. Cora Tarona, entrepreneur and HR services manager of Novartis, explained the addition of business majors in the camp. She said that in essence, those in biotechnology need to remember how involvement in commercialization stage is crucial to the industry's maximum success. The scientists' ideas will be of little use if they do not have a global perspective.

Tarona further explained that the combination of these students becomes significant as they leverage on each other's talents and capabilities. At the same time, BioCamp provides an excellent opportunity for Novartis to screen best-in-class talents by demonstrating to young people the career potentials that the pharmaceutical industry and Novartis can offer.

Aside from representatives from Novartis, the Biotechnology Forum was also graced by distinguished speakers who shared some updates on biotechnology as well as their opinions on the future of biotechnology in the Philippines. Dr. Gisela Concepcion, a multi-awarded researcher and professor of the Molecular Science Institute at the University of the Philippines, talked about the importance of biotechnology in the field of science and medicine, while Dennis Wonchie, a consultant of UP Los Baños, delivered a lecture entitled "Rice is Chips' Technopreneurship and Investment in Asia", shared his insights about the viability of biotechnology. Also, present in the event was Dennis Bela Ong, one of the country's representatives to BioCamp 2006 held in Singapore, who talked about his experience during last year's event.

WORK AT: Novartis Healthcare Philippines Inc. HR associate Anne Bella, Novartis Healthcare Philippines Inc compensation and HR services manager Cora Tarona, Novartis Healthcare Philippines Inc commercial director for general medicine Raul Ichikhan, University of the Philippines researcher and professor of the Marine Science Institute Dr. Gisela Concepcion, BF Apex Technology Park consultant Jenni Pasaribu and Novartis Healthcare Philippines Inc medical scientific liaison officer (MSLO) Dr. Isabelle Wee.

PWU PRESENTS 'MAYO...ISIPERAS NG UNYANG'

The Philippine Women's University recently presented to media the producers, cast and production team of the opera "Mayo... Isiperas ng Unyang" to mark the PWU centenary at the University's Dolores Campus. The media presentation was held at the Manila Marriott Hotel in Makati. Shown in (l) Andrea T. Ramirez, chairman and CEO, PWU board chair, accepting the poster to which the opera is inspired by; National Artist Bienvenido Lumbera's "May Day Eve" that Lutgardo Labad's Music Theatre Workshop in their heritage. Also shown, from left, are Gusto Reverso, ABS-CBN Center for Culture, Arts and Ethics; Ivanita Marcos, honorary chair of the opera committee; Hotel Operator Antonio Monfort; Monfort and Stella Abadilla, Dr. Jonathan Bondoc Reyes and Dr. Dolores Lutao, PWU president and chancellor, respectively; and actor Ronald Pacheco. Casting of the School of Music, music director and conductor Theodore Boller (l) and Dr. Lutao (r) at the Cultural Center of the Philippines' multi-theater, Roces Boulevard, Manila. Tickets are available at Ticketworld outlets (891-9999) and at the PWU Cultural of Manila (526-7482 and 526-8471 loc 402).

BIG WIN FOR MABUHAY SATELLITE CORP

Mabuhay Satellite Corp (MSC) recently inked a deal with PT Pasifik Satelite Nusantara (PSN), a major VSAT operator in Indonesia, to provide satellite service to Indosat, Indonesia's largest telephone company. Shown are, from left, Ngeng Sanano, head, marketing, PSN; Ryan Rod Tjandjaya, VP sales and marketing, PSN; Johannes Pangalila, head, sales and marketing, MSC; Edi Witjaksono, president director, PSN; and Ely Rosmin, head, network operations, PSN. The service will provide two 64Mbps internet backbone to Manila and Surabaya via digital and to Kuwait Teleport Two Internet service providers. The system by-passes Indosat undersea fiber optics that are presently cable cut like what happened in the November 2006 earthquake.

Globe Broadband supports surgical forum

GLOBE BROADBAND SUCCESSfully established 5th Regional Scientific Forum of the Philippine Society of General Surgeons (PSGS) and provided broadband Internet access at the conference venue.

The 3-day forum, consisting of surgeons from all over the country and residents and interns from hospitals and schools in Metro Manila, were able to search the Web and check their e-mails at the Globe lounge, where they also had the company's fast and affordable broadband Internet service.

Globe supports PSGS and advocates the use of information technology as a tool to aid doctors in the exercise of their profession. Globe Broadband users can get to access more content as it enables them to visit more websites and download more data, music and video via high-speed connectivity. The results have been dial-up. Globe Broadband offers real benefits to users as it allows real-time communication and provides them a richer multimedia experience.

It provides easy access to information, whether on the medical field such as news and updates, Indo Philippines surgeons to international medical societies, and allows fellows to conveniently communicate with one another via e-mail or chat. It also enables e-health, helps in document researches and is a useful tool for their continuing education.

Globe is a participant to the PSGS 5th Surgical Forum held Aug. 2 to 4 at Subic Shangri-La, Manila, sending the Internet via Globe Broadband.

Hero Sikon shares culinary expertise at Asia Food Expo

SAN MIGUEL PURE FOODS-GREAT Food Solutions (SMPF-GFS) brings back one of the country's top culinary experts Chef Rene Sikon to share her culinary expertise once more at this year's Asia Food Expo from Sep. 6 to 8 at the World Trade Center, Pasay City. The audience will surely make tasty discoveries in the cooking and baking demo on Sep. 8 at 1:30 p.m. as other guest chefs reveal the secrets behind favorite restaurant and café recipes, while prepping together a scrumptious feast at the Mac Nuts activity area.

Nestlé champions wellness mind-set

By Ed Tarroyo
Contributor

IN 2002, THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (WHO) reported that noncommunicable or lifestyle-related diseases had become so common that three-fourths annual worldwide for an alarming 60 percent of all deaths and 47 percent of all diseases.

What's more, these numbers are expected to rise to 73 percent and 60 percent, respectively, by 2020. Equally worrisome, 66 percent of these deaths occur in developing countries, among people who genetically are younger than those in developed countries.

In response to this worrisome trend, the WHO has endorsed a global strategy on diet, physical activity and health. The strategy seeks to reduce exposure to risks which give rise to noncommunicable diseases. At the same time, it recognizes the fact that moderate diets remain a major cause of death and illness, especially in developing countries.

The WHO strategy also states that people can remain healthy even into their 90s, through a range of health promoting behaviors that include healthy diets, adequate and regular physical activity, and avoiding the use of tobacco.

Nestlé to the challenge

Taking up the challenge, Nestlé group chairman and CEO Peter Brabeck announced in 2000 Nestlé's strategic direction to grow from a respected and trustworthy food company into a respected and trustworthy food, nutrition and wellness company.

Today, Nestlé is in the midst of this strategic transformation, strengthening its nutrition, health and wellness portfolio with stronger innovation and branding as well as improved delivery.

Nestlé Philippines' chair and CEO Nicolo Nanduiaver says that, in line with this strategic transformation, Nestlé recognizes that it must actively participate in addressing the health concerns of consumers.

"We think that we have, now and in the future, partner with consumers who trust our brands to help them achieve the best possible quality of life. We can does by promoting wellness with food and beverage as our point of reference, incorporating other elements necessary for wellness that synergize with nutrition."

Health, as defined by the WHO, is "the state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease." On the other hand, wellness is health, achieved with proper nutrition and physical activity.

In championing wellness, Nestlé director of communications May Dy-Liacco explains that Nestlé seeks to serve the changing needs of consumers and to help them obtain greater benefits as the company strives to make its

Nestlé is in the midst of strategic drive to transform and also strengthen its famed nutrition, health and wellness portfolio

brands and products more relevant to them.

"In the process, we are transforming ourselves into The Nutrition, Health and Wellness Company from being The World Food Company," Dy-Liacco says.

He notes that Nestlé has a continuous heritage since its founding in the 1800s of improving quality of life by providing good food and sound nutrition for generations of people worldwide.

Continuing campaign

Translating the global corporate vision into local action, Nestlé Philippines launched sweeping campaign for both the general public and its employees now known as Choose Wellness, Choose Nestlé.

"We jumpstarted the Wellness campaign in March 2005 with the 1st Philippine Nutritional Summit held in Manila, Superior Nutrition, Colon Health Forum, rallying the support of stakeholders and specialists to help promote useful concepts of nutrition, health and well-being," shares Nestlé Corporate Wellness Head Gem Ungco.

During the summit, Nestlé launched a major initiative, a yearly search for five Outstanding Nutrition, Health and Wellness Programs in the Philippines. With its second year conducted recently, the search is a recognition program to honor organized grassroots efforts all over the country that have succeeded in meeting specific nutrition, health and wellness concerns of various constituencies.

HOW: More than 2,000 doctors, health workers and nutritionists joined in the Health and Nutrition summits.

Sustainable practices

Using an intensive selection process, the search has recognized deserving programs in different parts of the country from both the public and private sectors. The outstanding programs serve as sustainable practices that can be replicated in other localities or by other groups with similar needs.

Following the 2005 summit, Nestlé launched its Wellness Program at SM Supermarket in May 2006 and again in most supermarkets in February 2006. Thousands of shoppers availed of free nutrition counseling with professional nutritionists.

These activities in the past two years have been so encouraging that the company decided to bring Choose Wellness, Choose Nestlé to more supermarkets, wet markets and drug stores this year.

Wellness to schools

Nestlé has also taken the Wellness Program to schools, to lay down the foundation for wellness education among children. Seminars were held for 80 private grade schools in Metro Manila last year.

While the primary students are the ultimate target beneficiaries of the program, the Nestlé team launch for schools initially targets school administrators, members of school committees on health and nutrition, guidance officers of homeroom teachers. Moreover, These are the decision-makers who influence the content of health curricula, the choices of food served at canteens, and the kinds of physical and other recreational activities for students.

Workshops included

In July 2006, Nestlé started starting its Nestlé team Campaign with other companies, including hospitals, call centers, telecoms and food companies, food chains, and media enterprises, by conducting day-long Wellness Workshops.

"The workshops aimed to equip the representatives of these companies with the necessary know-how to better assess the health and wellness profile of their workplaces and help them design a customized program for their respective companies.

Today, Nestlé has conducted the workshop for some 60 companies, and the number is growing each day.

Internal program

Since the wellness mind-set must start at home, Nestlé has initiated and sustained an internal Wellness Program for its employees. The program consists of nutrition education training, regular physical activities, and an intensive communications program to build awareness on the different aspects of health and wellness.

"The motivation to choose a life of wellness must come from within and requires personal commitment," says Ungco.

To encourage employees to choose and practice wellness, Nestlé organized Wellness Days, where employees participated in regular exercises encircling such a variety of physical activities that include body jam, zumba, Latin dancing and belly dancing.

To date, nearly 500 employees have personally committed themselves to the internal Wellness Program, where each participating employee is given a target weight to gain, maintain or lose in order to achieve ideal body weight.

Apart from individual weight targets, there are also group targets, where the cumulative weights of members are considered. Those who hit targets are rewarded.

Nutrition basics

Last year, the Corporate Wellness Unit gathered and oriented representatives of Nestlé workers for a two-day nutrition workshop, where they were taught the basics of nutrition.

"Through the workshop, we hope to be able to influence the consumers to make more nutritious food available for our employees," Cora explains.

After starting the task of creating awareness on the importance of wellness among different segments of the population, Nestlé leaders says that Choose Wellness, Choose Nestlé now asks consumers to be proactive and make wellness their choice, as a way of life.

Nestlé want to help consumers become more aware of the importance of nutrition and diet, and help them manage their lifestyle practices, so they are less healthier and more fulfilling lives," Nanduiaver says.

"There is still a long way to go in making daily practices of wellness a part of the Filipino way of life. But Nestlé is committed to help the Filipino consumer choose a life of wellness," he says.

Ed Tarroyo is the chair and CEO of Contributor Inc.

CHERY opens a window for the Filipinos to enjoy what the Europeans and Americans do to buying high quality products from China.

Would you like to go places in an MPV priced like an AUV? Or would you like to go to work with just a few Pesos spent for fuel but arriving in style and comfort? Or would you like to drive an SUV for the price of a sedan? If your answer is yes, then Chery might just be the right choice. The mission of Chery's Acteco engine is to achieve the optimum performance possible in a fuel-injected engine. This means peak performance with the lowest fuel consumption. To top it all, Chinese manufacturers adopt the Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) method in determining the life expectancies of all spare parts. Whatever benefits they get in their research is passed on through the cars that they sell or export.

Contrary to beliefs, China-made cars are often times better than other Asian countries or even European countries because the manufacturing equipment are mostly, if not all, made in the USA or in Europe. The raw materials, particularly the metal parts, are of superior quality because China can afford to hire good metallurgists plus the employment of robotics and precision instruments.

If China could sustain their aerospace technology programs, I do not see how they could not be able to build quality vehicles.

EFFICIENCY NEED NOT BE EXPENSIVE!

Paging service is coming back

People think texting has rendered pagers as obsolete technology. Well, they might be in for a big surprise

By Frank Cimatu
Inquirer Northern Luzon

BAGUIO CITY—PERHAPS for the pager, that black device strapped on the belt which alerts the user (sometimes embarrassingly) when he has a message?

In the United States, pagers were already passé because only the telephone numbers of the sender would be reflected.

But in the Philippines, simple messages are sent back to a pager.

In typical Filipino Catholic fashion, casualties were censored for the employee receiving the call.

People thought that pagers would last forever but the technology would be rendered obsolete by texting.

But now a sort of a paging service is coming back.

A new licensee of the Baguio Export Processing Zone, the Florida-based NW Outsourcing International Services Inc., is a telephone answering service company that is more than a call center firm.

Dean Francesco, NOIS founder, said she would be employing about 300 agents in their new location.

"Those are waiting back home for an incident," she said.

The telephone answering service (TAS) industry has much evolved from the telephone operator setup it once was when she started in the industry in 1973 when she was 17.

"We take the calls for offices of physicians, service companies and professional companies during the times they are out of their offices. We transmit the messages to our customers via fax, e-mail, pager, cell phone or to their avaliance according to the pre-arranged instructions of each client," she said.

Pagers are also getting obsolete but there are still some customers, especially doctors, who use them.

"We also set appointments for our clients. We take orders, credit card information and processing," Francesco said.

Contrevox Communications Corp., a company Francesco founded in Portland, Oregon, in 1986, is one such TAS.

For example, a patient would like to talk to his doctor during the off hours for a medical emergency. He would call the company's number and a telephone receptionist would accept the call.

The receptionist would send the message to the doctor either through e-mail, fax, pager, cell phone or text messaging, or a combination of these methods, depending on the urgency.

"This would also apply to a nurse or a hospital's resident to a doctor for orders regarding patients.

Francesco said in the NOIC, 60 percent of their clients are in the medical field. These include doctors, dentists, chiropractors and those in the home care services.

She said they also service calls from plumbers, electricians, pool services and pest control workers, realtors, lawyers and accountants.

"We get about 100,000 calls a month," she said.

She said they would expect the same volume when the NOIS here would be fully operational.

In Manila, Francesco said they would give recruiting and testing orientations for 20 applicants and only four would pass the tests.

"But here in Baguio, I tested and interviewed 20 people and 19 passed. That's phenomenal. You say she would be proud," she said.

She said they would initially get 75 agents and then later 225 more for three shifts for a 24/7 service. NOIS is located at the Norwegian building at the Baguio Export Processing Zone.

"We trained by outsourcing agents in two countries. We hired our first agents were in the Philippines. That is when we decided to open NW Outsourcing International Services Inc.," she said.

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Business Features Editor
Margie Quimpo-Rojales

BUSINESS Friday

In Sorsogon, villagers still sell seashells by the shore

Text and photos by Joanna Lee Bolivar
Inquirer Southern Luzon

GUBAT, SORSOGON—ARRIVING AT BEAR beach in Gubat town, 16 kilometers from Sorsogon City, one would marvel at the sight of the long rows of powdery white sand and the spectacular view of the Pacific Ocean.

Along the shore, women carrying bilao (round native trays) filled with different items made of shells would be seen walking, hawking their wares to any visitor they may chance upon.

For these women, the sight of visitors at the beach makes them smile for it means business is at hand.

Most people wonder going to the beach a scar—something they want to do yet rarely get to undertake due to constraints of time and resources.

But these women get to spend almost everyday, especially weekends, at the beach, selling shells.

The seasons do not always make a sale. During the off-peak months, from July to February, profits are lean.

Sellers earn as much as P2,000

Toyota takes automotive lead with local production of Vios

45 years
Metrobank

Toyota Motor Philippines Corporation, the biggest automotive company in the country, unveiled the all-new version of the best-selling passenger car, the Vios.

TMP is confident that the introduction of this new model will surpass the heritage of the previous generation Vios, furthering Toyota's leadership in the passenger car segment and in overall sales.

"We mark the Vios all Generation as another significant milestone in the history of Toyota Motor Philippines as we launch our newest model, the all-new Vios," said Dr. Yu. "This best-selling local passenger car shall now be manufactured in this plant to global Toyota quality standards."

"With the completely redesigned Vios, we are strengthening our local production and taking the next big step in the development of the Philippine automotive industry," Dr. Yu explained.

"The new Vios is now ready to take on a more established role, not only in terms of its safety and product aspects, but also in terms of Toyota's overall contribution to society," said TMP president Yu.

The Vios is now produced as a GX2 model, reinforcing Toyota's strategy of creating more jobs and encouraging more investments. With this significant development, Toyota's plant will be producing one of its major volume models.

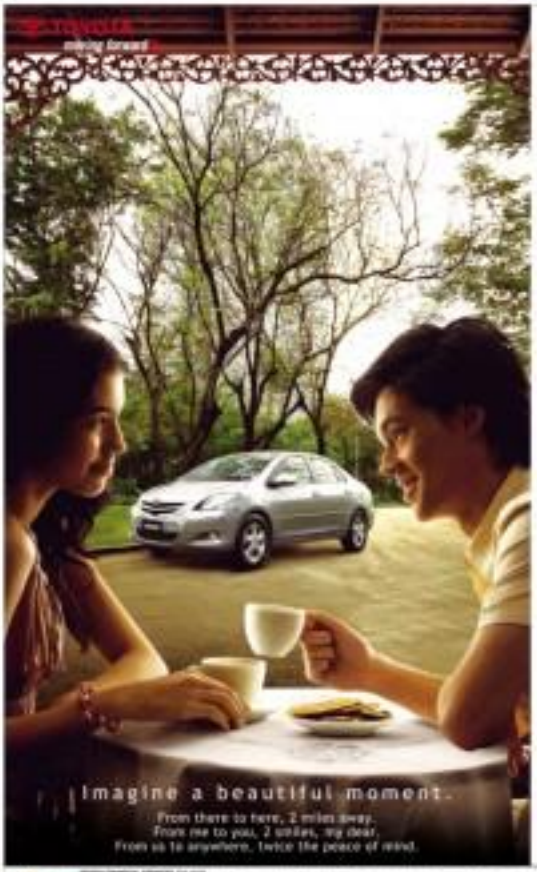
"As the number one vehicle company in the country, Toyota is committed to meet the dynamic needs of our customers. At the same time, we are proud to be a contributing partner of the Philippine Government in the task of building this great nation," declared Dr. Yu.

Since 1988, the Toyota Group has brought in over P29 billion in investments, with the Vios localization project accounting for P1 billion. In terms of revenue generation, the Toyota Group has remitted over P70 billion in taxes and customs duties to the national and local governments since the company started operating.

In 2006, the Toyota Group accounted for 21% of all Philippine automotive exports with a total of US$642 million. Furthermore, the group employs more than 12,000 team members throughout the country, including its network of dealers and suppliers.

The Toyota Special Economic Zone in Santa Rosa, Laguna is now the hub of a state-of-the-art manufacturing and distribution enterprise employing world-class systems and staffed by highly-skilled Team Members. To date, Toyota is providing its customers with locally-built cars such as the Innova, the Corolla Altis, the All-New Vios and services whose quality is equal to that available anywhere else around the globe. These completely knocked-down (CKD) products, combined with the other models, make Toyota the automaker offering the widest line-up with 12 products to fit the various needs of its customers.

Toyota's commitment to be a driving force in Philippine business and society will always be moving forward. Other than the latest figures, Toyota is always aiming to provide products and services for the customers and conduct programs which make every vehicle purchase and ownership more affordable, convenient, and an altogether satisfying experience.



Double Safety

The New VIOS has been rigorously tested to ensure that every beautiful moment you have is protected every step of the way.

ALL NEW VIOS
My Design. My Pride.

Recyclers earn ₱50,000 from trash

A project led by SM turns people into entrepreneurs

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—A wide array of garbage collected by workers, office workers, drivers and small entrepreneurs fetched more than P50,000 from recycling campaigns in the recently held Waste Market Fair here.

Three people submitted 108 kg of electronic wastes and 1937 (pounds)-size (kilograms) bottles, 1,800 kg of paper and cartons, 21 pieces of lead acid batteries and 112 pieces of ink and toner cartridges in the fair.

SM City Pampanga, the host of the May 23 event, reported the sales based on records of recycling companies like the TUBOS, which bought the empty cartridges; Titan International Paper Co. (Tipco), paper and carton; Semi Recycling, old computers and PET bottles; and Philippine Bottlers, used lead acid batteries.

The waste market fair was a project of the SM Supermalls, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Philippine Business for the Environment, and the city government of San Fernando.

"(The fair) makes it possible for me to transact business with recycling companies and exchange recyclable items for cash while promoting the environmental advantages of recycling and proper waste disposal," the partners said in a statement here.

They said the next fair, to be held at the SM City Clark parking lot on Sept. 8, would buy used items such as cartons, newspapers, notebooks and bond papers, ink and toner cartridges, electronic wastes such old (cutting) processing units, keyboards, computer monitors and other electronic appliances, lead batteries for cars, trucks and rechargeable lamps, PET bottles and other plastic products, and aluminum and tin cans.

At the same time, the DENR in Central Luzon continued to promote the 3Rs—or the reduction, reuse and recycling of waste—amid what it called "worsening garbage problem" in the region despite the passage of the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act (Republic Act No. 9003) in 2000.

The law requires the mandatory segregation of solid wastes at the source prior to collection.

In other states that the issuing of source-segregated recyclable material with other solid waste in any vehicle, box, container or receptacle used in solid waste collection or disposal is prohibited and punishable of up to P500,000 fine, plus a maximum 30 persons of the violator's net annual income during the previous year.

Regidor de Leon, DENR regional director, said if every person generates half a kilogram of garbage a day, the region's eight million residents could churn as much as 4,000 tons of trash daily or 1.44 million tons yearly.

De Leon said the 3Rs were "practical and doable" efforts in curbing the garbage problem.

In Central Luzon, he said local governments collect 70 percent of the garbage generated by households and business establishments.

The rest end up in canals, vacant lots, street corners, market places, creeks and rivers. Source: Dreyan, Inquirer General Insurance

TAKE A LOOK promotes the environmental advantages of recycling and proper waste disposal

In Sorsogon, villagers still sell seashells ...

from page B1-1

"When it is off-peak season, sometimes there are days when we really have no sales," said Cecilia Estrellita, 43, one of the women selling shell products. "Minsan'w sa pag wag ka, sayh (you'll be lucky if anyone buys from you)."

Earning nothing on some days, however, does not stop the women from going back to the beach.

"I hope someone can help us," added Marian Heranda, 36, another woman selling shells. "Minsan sana talaga bawo (there are days when we don't make a sale)."

But finding a way out, especially in economic selling shell products becomes a difference story.

The shell makers said they earn as much as P2,000 a day.

The women all agree that what they earn may not be enough to put food on their table. What remains of the money will be set aside for their children who go to school.

Even if these women do not belong to any organization of shell makers, they said they do not compete with each other.

"We support each other here and we are happy," said Heranda.

Family thing

Everyone in the family is involved in this small business.

While the men in their households till the farms or hand fish from the sea, the women help in making the shell products.

"Even our daughters help in make accessories and other products made of shells," said Imelda Dit, 48, who has seven children.

She has been making shell products since she was in her teens old.

"But sometimes, when we make these accessories anyone can problem since making the products is strenuous on the eyes," Dit said.

Marian Bernera, 22, is the youngest among the women selling shells.

Perrenia, who is a freshman at the Gubat National High School, said she goes to the beach every weekend to sell shell products for her studies.

The money I earn becomes my school allowance, she said, adding that if she happens to earn extra, she gives it to her family.

Most of the women here said they spent P1,000 to P10,000 to start their business.

They also said it took them several months to get back their investment.

Some of the shells that they process are gathered from the shoreline. Others were brought by shell suppliers from neighboring towns, who bring different kinds of shell.

The women buy the shells per piece, which costs from P15 to P300, depending on the variety.

Jenny Tabidasan, 40, who has been making shell products for 15 years, said it would take her 25 minutes to finish small accessories, and about three hours to make complicated and big items like chandeliers.

Products

Even without formal education on fashion, the local women design the accessories themselves.

Among the fashion accessories they make are earrings, necklaces, bracelets and anklets. Each costs anywhere from P5 to P450, depending on the materials used.

The women also sell accessories made of plastic beads.

Aside from the glass shell key chains, they also fashion chains in the form of flowers, pigs, rosaries and animals.

They also sell shell coasters that cost P30, and chandeliers at P95 to P1,200, depending on the size.

"The bigger the chandeliers, the more expensive," Tabidasan said.

Other items that they make out of shells are jewelry cases, cellular phone accessories and table decorations.

Dinah Dolor, senior trade and development specialist of the Department of Trade and Industry in Bicol province, said she is encouraging the shell makers to register with their office.

She said, under the DTI, the shell makers can undergo product development training to further develop their skills.

"What we are doing now is (DTI is incorporating skills making is an incentive in the area's handicrafts since Unlike is one of the handicraft-producing towns in the province," Dolor said. "Also is also the focus of Gubat since it is under the one town, one product (program) of the (DTI)."

JEWELRY Love made of shells

TABLE Decorations

FLOWER SHAPED cell phone accessory

Jan Roque on Health Partnership at The Medical City Adult Wellness Center

"My blood pressure reached a high of 168/118 in 2... The Medical City During my consultation, I realized... would be taking care of me during and after the pr... in a safe place. My wife was with me the whole time...

DHL seeks more YES people
(Young Entrepreneurs for Sustainability)

By Nina T. Chiongbian

IN BUSINESS, HOW DO YOU KNOW you've delivered?

Entrepreneurs typically measure performance in terms of financial gain, but a new breed called social entrepreneurs apparently care more about the impact of their enterprise on society and the community.

DHL Express Philippines, the local presence of the Deutsche Post subsidiary, recently selected its top social entrepreneurs through the DHL Young Entrepreneurs for Sustainability (DHL YES) Awards.

The award seeks to recognize and support young community leaders as part of its thrust for social responsibility.

DHL defined the social entrepreneur as one who identifies problems/needs, innovates and implements programs to help improve the lives of his or her constituents in line with the multifaceted optimum goals.

At the awarding ceremony in the Ayala Museum with Senator Loren Legarda, JT Dirk Dupree Philippines country manager Lucy Llantada honored the finalists for the inaugural search. They are:

HONDAY "BEN" BUSING, 33, **Operations at Power Mercury Franchising Inc.**

He is one of the people responsible for implementing new methods of enhancing asset management that cater to both students and professionals.

The business is located in Pasig City, metro Manila. The four-year-old company uses knowledge-processed mercury cleaning skills and techniques to help people efficiently process information.

It was once a purely profit-oriented business built around the franchising model, but Busing soon found that the earthbound machines could help students learn faster and gain confidence.

Busing shared that the company approached the Department of Education (DepEd) and proposed an extinguisher where library inventory would be given time slots during school hours so study students manage extinguishing techniques or assist students to integrate such techniques within existing house plans.

"We were referred to some classes in Caloocan City where the students had difficulty coping with their lessons," Busing said. "It was very challenging but we have seen a significant improvement in the students' economic and level of confidence."

Busing and his aim is to replicate the success of the program in more public schools to help improve the quality of its graduates.

"Basic abilities will be our future workers, our future leaders. Teaching them how to improve their memory not only improves their performance, it gives them confidence. This will help them in future endeavors. It is good that we are also earning a profit through the franchising, but it is even better from our perspective that we are using the profits so far able to help students in the public school system," he said.

LORENZO MANALO, 33, is the founder of the National College of Science and Technology

NCST is a school that provides industry-specific training and work for young people from low-income households. The school is located in Dasmariñas, Cavite.

When he was 23 years old, dynamic, together with his friends and elder brother, pooled their resources to launch a school that would give quality education for low-income children. Thus, the beginning of NCST.

Manalo's nine-year-old enterprise teaches young people from low-income families through a call-help program using the Dual Training System.

Under the system, students get theoretical and practical training according to industry needs. They are also allowed to get business jobs using the skills they learned.

The employment rates in institutions of practical training and the income it gives career enrollments for their school fees.

Aside from industry training, the students have a computer laboratory to familiarize them with the use of computers and other functions, with a two-hour computer class of 1:1.

In 2005, the school offered its first internationally developed course, the Certificate in Manufacturing Technology and the Diploma in Production Technology course (both under the Dual Training System Department).

Today, the school has 140 full-time and 30 part-time employees. Earning the respect and confidence of the academic community in Cavite for its entrepreneurial work, Manalo was elected as the first president of the Association of Public and Private Technical-Education and Training Providers of Cavite Inc.

"We find that there are many bright and promising young people, but they need some help reorient to living in classes in dangerous places.

Recognizing the dire need of that below unemployed, Manalo contributes to the economy through instruction, is at set up a 40-bed Dormitory in 2000. Today, Fire One has 1,200 beds with branches in Dasmariñas, Bacoor and Ermita. The profits are invested back into the business for expanding and improving facilities.

Fire One has grown into a multi-faceted and work-for-one concern under Dear Generalissimo project. Under the project, tenants may help renounce rents from prohibitionist parts to encourage for a period of four occupancy to take on minor jobs to get an allowance.

Generalissimo also provides skills seminars on career development, personal finance, investments management and small business management and conducts with 400-plus manning agencies to establish an online job board to help with job searches.

The project owners was able to reduce average waiting time for jobs from seven to three months.

Dirk said there 90,000 workers have been served by his project.

"Most of the outreach and CSR (corporate social responsibility) projects [were] giving away the stuff from owners. Giving donations and then spending until the money runs out. What social entrepreneurs [are] here with their work a that there is a way to serve and also earn a profit, which will again be used to serve the community," he said.

More YES people needed

Llantada, meanwhile, expressed confidence that social entrepreneurship will gain ground in the Philippines, supported by efforts to increase awareness, including the DHL YES awards.

"It has been said that we need an army of social entrepreneurs to really make an impact, but we are getting there," he said.

"That is why we are embarking on this search, and why we are looking for [like to run as the regional competition. We want to see the profile of social entrepreneurship in the country so more people will be able to effect change. Sometimes they lack basic profit and a lot of accolades, but really, the social entrepreneurs should be lauded more because they are the ones who are making sweet positive changes," he added.

You're qualified if you innovate, conceptualize and implement programs to help improve the lives of the people

DHL YES Awards winners Brinson, Diaz and Manalo

DHL Express country manager Lucy Llantada with the YES

Spa for ₱299, anyone?

From page B1 »

offering deals, private rooms and very good services. In other spas, customers have to pay more for a private room, whereas in Big Apple, every customer has his own.

They also invest on excellent training program for the staff to make sure their customers get quality services. By doing this, the spa was able to lower its prices, making them really affordable to their regular market.

The most popular services are the Hilotherapy, Shiatsu, which is designed to make the customer feel calm and relaxed using essential oil, and the Hilot Energy, a spa massage which uses pressure to energize the body. Each massage costs ₱299.

Other services are Massages of the World such as the Thai, Hilot, Balinese Massage, and Hawaiian Lomi Lomi. They also offer mini spa, facials, scalp treatment, manicure and pedicure.

They also choose locations that are convenient and very visible to the people. One of their branches is inside the Quiapo's mall near the LRT, a strategy that enables everyone to see the outlet every time they take the train. Other branches are in Market! Market!, Bel-Air mall of asia, and Shi Cyan.

Big Apple also believes in helping people by giving them jobs that do not require a college degree. "We hire people based on attitude. As long as they believe in the concept. Even if you don't know how to massage, we'll put you into training, in two weeks time, you'll already know how to massage. There are so many people out there looking for jobs, and that's part of our vision, to help the Filipino people by providing them with jobs," adds Llanto.

As more and more people discover the benefits of a budget spa, Big Apple aims to go global in a few years time. Other budget spa may operate and innovate, Big Apple has started, but Big Apple is confident that it can still be on top. Knowing that they have upped it another that also ready to indulge in their desire to relax and pamper themselves without exceeding their budget. Big Apple believes that they have succeeded in that aim.

Big Apple Express Spa outlets are soon to open in *The Fort, Ayala Ecity, Marta Heights, Subic, and in Robinsons Galleria. Big Apple Express Spa is open for Walk-Ins.*

BUSINESS PARTNERS: Vince Fernando, Mark Cotoco, Rosalie Cruz-Pagsuyoin and Ruth Hilario

005, which was extremely dangerous for my age. Wanting to be there for my family was the reason I decided to visit the Asian Wellness Center at
d this prevention is definitely better than cure. I was given a very thorough briefing of my 24-hour wellness program. I was the wellness team who
gram. The amazing was was my idea. I asked that it be included in the executive check up. I felt so much in control. I learned a lot and I know I can
e. When it was finished she was so impressed that she couldn't wait to undergo her own wellness program!"

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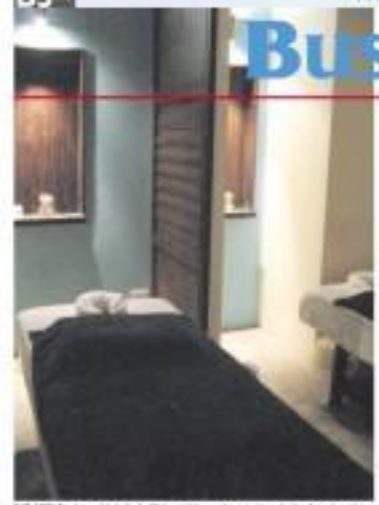
BUSINESS Friday

Spa for ₱299, anyone?



BIG APPLE makes pride in its facilities which are classy and conducive for relaxation

By Princess Daisy C. Ominga

MOST OF THE TIME, THE WORDS "spa" and "cheap" seem unlikely to be used in the same sentence. As spa has always been associated with the elite, the regular mass find it hard to manage one spending their hard-earned money on such a luxury.

Big Apple Express Spa aims to debunk that notion. Established to be the spa for the "mass," it deviates from what people usually get from other spas, like sauna, showers and steam rooms, and instead features on the essentials of a good spa: cleanliness, competent staff, and privacy.

"We forego all those facilities (sauna, shower, steam room) in order to give more value to the customers through affordable prices, but we also make sure to maximize all the essential elements of a spa," says Karla Mace, one of the owners of Big Apple Express Spa.

Established in 2005 by business partners Mace, Victor Fernando, Emelito Gan Peguanan and Mark Orbos, who are all massage enthusiasts, Big Apple Express Spa is the group's answer to all the high-end spas dominating the market. But instead of competing head-on with the others, they saw the opportunity to create a niche by catering to what they believe are the ones who really get physically tired: the average, lower class workers.

Upon finding out through a study that most spa-goers only avail themselves of the massage but skip the sauna or amenities, Mace and his business partners realized that customers can do away without other facilities and just have the massage. But what they

THE FAÇADE is the best marketing strategy.

lack in the usual perks offered by other spas, they compensate with the things that matter the most to customers.

Big Apple Express Spa prides itself in

NOW AVAILABLE at Premium Executive 0% Deferred Payment Offer

Next time, spare Junior's savings.

Too broke that you need to break your child's piggybank?
Not when you have

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i-Assure max is the lifetime protection plan that takes care of your family's future and provides funds for spending on life's necessities and leisure. i-Assure max gives cash allowances by the end of the 4th year and every other year thereafter. These are benefits guaranteed by the financial strength and dependability of nearly 100 years of continuous service by the first and largest Filipino life insurance company, Insular Life.

To know more about i-Assure max, call 771-1818 or e-mail us at inquiry@insularlife.com.ph. You can also visit our website at www.insularlife.com.ph.

THE INSULAR LIFE ASSURANCE COMPANY, LTD.

INSULAR LIFE
iloverewards
Pay your premiums & enjoy perks and pleasure

A survey once revealed that in times of financial difficulties, "insurance premiums" rank last in the "To Pay" list.

One of the world's most possible, most consumer or investment decision-makers would prefer to fork out hard-earned money to buy cotton toys, utility bills (electricity, water, cable and telephone), and credit card bills over insurance premiums. Worse, if the light power outage became tighter, insurance premiums would find its way into the "Won't Pay Now, Will Think About It Later" category and would eventually be bumped off the list.

This survey finding is disheartening because the policy owners seem to overlook the reason why they purchased their insurance policies in the first place – that is to secure their future. Further, paying insurance premiums seems to be among the least priorities because it is perceived to be a "burden" and a continuing obligation for a while.

To change this vision and make paying insurance premiums a more rewarding endeavor for its policyholders, Insular Life, the first and the largest Filipino life insurance company, in coordination with Love Rewards, a unique feature of its Extra Special Policyholders (ESP) Program.

Insular Life's Love Rewards enables its ESPs to earn reward points for paying their insurance premiums on or before the due date. Advance payments refer to payments made 1 day to a maximum of 30 days prior to premium due date, regardless of mode of payment (quarterly, semi-annual or annual). The rewards points earned may be accumulated or may be redeemed for shopping, food, dining and lifestyle gift certificates or donation upon maturity.

Among the rewards line-up, the ESP can choose whether to augment his existing budget for basic needs (groceries, medicines, clothes, etc.), reward himself (spa treatment, choice appliances, gadgets, etc.), or have his cool (donation to CARE Philippines).

This early payment incentive, one of the few innovative solutions Insular Life provides to its policyholders, is convenient to those who plan their purchases or expenses in advance. It is like accomplishing your "to-buy or to-do" lists ahead and having maximum benefits at the same time.

More so, one will no longer think of paying insurance premiums as a burden, but as a rewarding experience. Ultimately, one will regard insurance not as an unappealing product but a useful commodity.

I Love Rewards makes Insular Life the only life insurance company that offers rewards points alongside insurance protection, and at the same time gives flexible rewards options. Plus the tagline "Enjoy the rewards that come with consuming your premiums to us. Love Life. Love Rewards."

In its recently concluded Premium Relief Promotion (50 Redemption Points), some ESPs chose to redeem their rewards points to donate to institutions such as CARE Philippines, National Kidney Foundation, and others.

Insular Life takes pride in providing a full circle of convenience solution to policyholders. With through the ESP Program, distributors (Love Rewards, 12th copy on their annual medical check-up and complimentary breakfast, as well as consultants, Rewards, all ESPs are given the Prestige Card that offers discounts and special perks from select merchant partners and exclusive invitation to events sponsored by the Company.

ESPs can inquire or claim their rewards by calling 771-1818 (area 1310 to 1320, Monday to Friday, from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Unless inform the Marketing Staff of the rewards item of your choice based on the Official Rewards Catalogue and they will advise you regarding the delivery of your redemption coupon.

BEAUTY

LIFESTYLE

Simonin says . . .

Philippe Simonin, famous French inventor of a non-invasive anti-aging cosmetic technique, is in town to team up with Vicki Belo

By Chris Rocio-Ferreras

BEAUTY IS AND WILL ALWAYS be a booming industry. Even people with lower income can afford beauty products. In a downturn economy, women, there is always a part of their budget reserved.

45 years

Metrobank

45 years of quality leadership in banking with Metrobank

Metrobank Card Corporation

A wholly owned subsidiary of Metrobank and FGBC

Having been founded in 1962, the Metropolitan Bank and Trust Company (Metrobank) has, indeed, gone through great triumphs and travails in order to operate as a universal bank for 45 years. As the current year marks Metrobank's 45th anniversary of excellent banking leadership, the Metrobank Card Corporation is also pleased to partake in this grand celebration of leadership as one of Metrobank's most trusted subsidiaries.

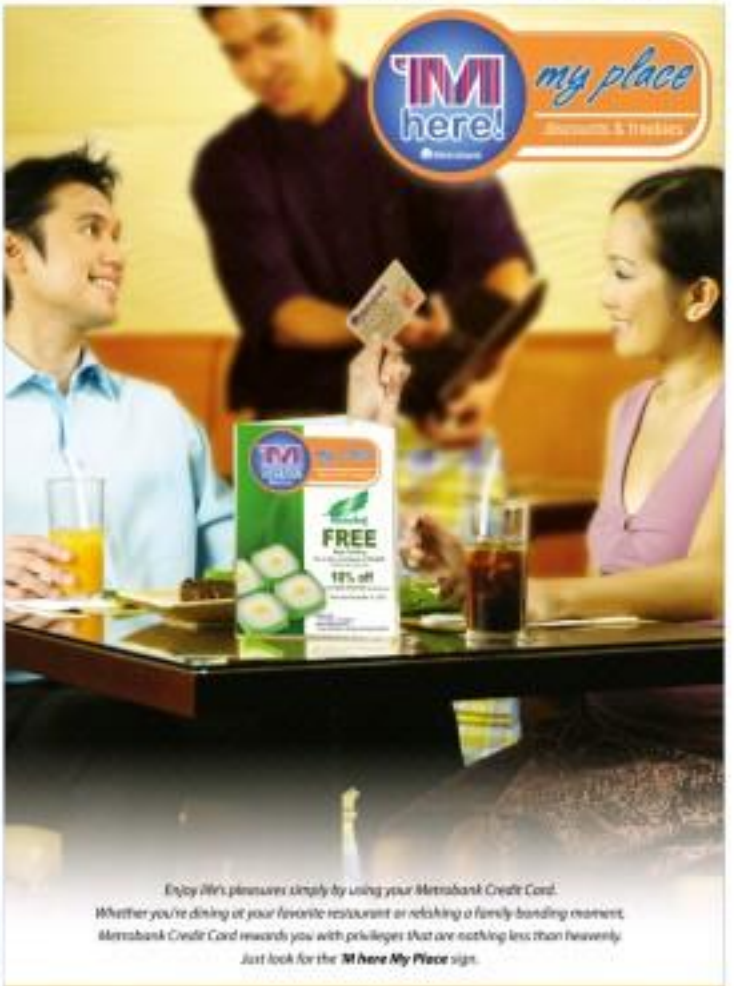
Metrobank Card Corporation (MCC) has always been known to continually deliver new and exciting things for its cardholders. Worldwide acceptance, higher credit limits, and rewards programs are just a fraction of the wonderful features that the cards have to offer. Over the past years, MCC aggressively developed and brought in market-innovative products, services, and various programs that provide value to its customers while attracting the attention of potential customers.

The success of Femme Visa and CashBOOst can be attributed to MCC's targeting the customer's specific needs and wants. Its sustainability is due to MCC's customer service improvement and steadfast commitment to improving capabilities in information management.

Already achieving success in past years through strategic partnerships, MCC currently realizes excellent performance by working with key partners. However, one of the most important components to the success of MCC cannot be overlooked—the unfaltering dedication and energy of its employees.

Tony Maughan, the new incumbent president of MCC, further shares his vision of the future. "While some people would see the target of being the number one card company in the region as a very visionary aspiration, I would say that it's a very real aspiration for us. If we pull up, challenge the boundaries, I don't see what can stop us."

Great things are definitely taking shape at Metrobank Card Corporation as they continue to uphold their core values of living the Filipino "Bayanihan Spirit". Metrobank is committed to creating and providing the best possible value for their core constituents and striving to deliver a wide array of premium-value products and services with distinctive quality. Through the outstanding leadership of the MCC's mother company Metrobank, great skillfulness and quality performance is unquestionably parallel.



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Simonin says . . .

From page D

for Destiny."

Je says would-be-trend-setting doctor Philippe Simonin, whose high-profile clients include French Prime Minister Francois Fillon and actress Audrey Tatou ("Amelie" and "Da Vinci Code"). Two years ago, he saved all you-know-what by opening the beauty market for possibilities, courtesy of the luxury skincare brand La Prairie. Unfortunately, they did not take me to Mozilla. "to laugh at.

Let it be. The Philippines tends to be overlooked by most business zones for obvious economic reasons. Thanks however to people's enjoyment like Vicki Belo, the best products and services eventually find their way to these shores.

Still, to increase it now to town to woo the resident doctors and introduce of the Belo Medical Group on the Simonin Method of dermatological care.

"Instead of wooing with him in Belo and coming home to Ohio (and my staff)" says he, "I drew him to give our doctors first-hand training."

The Belo clinic for men on the 19th level of Bonifacio at Makati is being renamed Belo Medical Group-Dr. Philippe Simonin Method. (The men's clinic should not be confused with the cosmetic and dermo clinic for women also in Ramon's that is doing very well, thank you very much.)

Full range

The rejuvenated clinic offers the entire range of the Simonin treatment regime and introduces Serum Electro-Replacement Process (ERP) for wrinkles and cell regeneration to Anti-Aging Transdermal Injection (ATI) for weight loss to OTI for hair loss.

Belo sought out Simonin in Paris as part of her research and development for her slimming medical program.

"If you listed to get on Dr. Simonin's waiting list. When he finally was able to treat me on one of my trips, it was at 11 p.m. but it was worth it. I was just blown away," she recalls.

Simonin says he uses around 20 clients to be the test to treat five in, to midnight. He spends two or three days of the week at his clinic in Paris and two to three days at the Philippe Simonin Beauty Institute in Geneva.

"There is no surgery, no injection and no freezing of the skin," reasons Simonin. He uses HIS which allows the treatment of the cosmetic ingredients and skin imperfections like acne and wrinkles.

HIS involves applying electrodes under them 18-carat gold to the skin. Through low-tension currents, Simonin makes the cells believe they must heal a cut that we call a wrinkle. As if it is surrounded, the epidermis deeply regenerates, and the wrinkles are filled out until they disappear. The treatment is done quickly—30 minutes tops—without pain and without any side effects for previous.

Unique technique

Belo is quick to admit that the Simonin process is so unlike her own aesthetic techniques, some of which she has pioneered in the Philippines and which rely on state-of-the-art equipment.

"There are four methods listed in the French cosmetology and dermatological encyclopedia," says Belo. "One is plastic surgery another is fillers and Botox, another is chemical peeling and lasers. And then there is the Simonin process."

Simonin counts the most faithful beauty seekers among his clients. After the initial treatments, they show up at his clinic once annually.

At the media lunch tendered by Belo at her fabulous Dasmariñas home for the French anti-aging expert, there were shows of patients whose skin barely changed from 20 years ago when their first visited seeing Simonin. "Maintenance is very important," he chorused.

For other people, however, results like are the least of their worries. For patients whose bones are riddled with acne or disfigured by scars, there is hope. Slides taken after a bone reconstruction show Simonin's patients having clear or near-smooth skin against the rough Bar Simonin process.

"I can treat acne that are red, brown, inclosed or drained," says Simonin. "But body scars are harder to treat than facial scars."

Simonin first came up with the ERP process in 1980 while working as a researcher. He later did biopsies at the Rothschild Foundation which proved the reconstitution of vascular or nervous risks. Those biopsies were then submitted to Centre National de la Recherche. The result of his experiments is a hidden work earned him a place in The French dermatological encyclopedia.

It was not until 2001, however, that Simonin perfected and registered a patent for a technique that produced the same results as ERP without having to insert subcutaneous needles into the thickness of the wrinkles.

In his battle against skin aging, Simonin has also produced, through an internationally renowned home laboratory, a line of cosmetic products that safeguards against visible signs of aging.

NEW TEAM in town. French anti-aging doctor Philippe Simonin and beauty expert Vicki Belo will be offering Simonin's secret active Prime & dermatological procedures at Belo Medical Group clinic in Ayala's Makati.

Best-kept beauty secrets

MAKE UP FOR EVER'S BEST KEPT SECRETS line of products offers unique, innovative and highly effective beauty products that deliver specific benefits while also allowing the makeup artist great ease in achieving special, creative results.

Make Up For Ever's Glossy Full Hard Effect Plumping Lip Gloss places the focus on the lips by creating plump pouty lips. Mesa-wrinkle, its Matte Lip Gloss (the opposite by creating subtle, yet absolutely dramatic lips.

Make Up For Ever's Glossy Full is an ultra-brilliant lip gloss that creates a high-gloss effect with just one application and a vivid effect with two or three. It is colorless and is designed to be applied over any lipstick. It will give a sheer flat color or intensify of the lipstick. Unlike the high-gloss effect, Glossy Full is not sticky. It keeps the lipstick in place longer while providing moisture and gloss. Aloe from extracts is also has the added benefit of a mild plumping effect. The result is soft, supple, youthful lips.

Make Up For Ever's Matte Lip, meanwhile, is a dry cream that contains ultra-fine cellulose powders which instantly mattifies any lipstick. Matte Lip's unique formulation does not alter the color of the lipstick and provides the added benefit of giving it longer wear, and although the Lips are powdery, Matte Lip contains a new kind of glycerine and botanical extracts that soothes the lips and prevents drying.

Other products in Make Up For Ever's Best Kept Secrets range are: ALIBI Ideal Matifying Primer, Stop Shining Mattifying Gel, Mattifying Powder of Mist & Fix Makeup Fixer Spray, Eye Soul Waterproof Liquid Concentrate Lip Plus Lipstick Pliers and Lip Glow Pencil.

Call Make Up For Ever Manager Lo at 630-5782 and 584 The Block at 44 (8000) for a complimentary one-on-one consultation with the makeup artists certified by Make Up For Ever Paris.

Colorful diamonds

THERE'S A GREAT SOLUTION FOR getting that pearly-clean-in-your-nails...one without a stiff price tag and not requiring a visit to an expensive salon. From Bobbie Brid cosmetics, an industry leader for over 20 years, comes the Bobbie Diamond Collection.

For common problems like hang-nails, dry nails and rough cuticles, there's Bobbie Diamond Collection's Fortifying Oil, an energy booster that restores nails to repair shape. This unique formula has Vitamin E, Jojoba Oil, Sweet Almond Extract and Borage Oil to keep the nail area more elastic, flexible, moisturized, and youthful. This oil-rich formula also provides needed thickening to keep nails from becoming brittle or they look their best with or without polish.

Weak, brittle and soft nails will find the answer in Nail Growth Solution. It has amino-acid booster and calcium pantothenate that aid in nail generation, and Vitamin E and soy protein. Rub oil on nails to enhance to accelerate and prevent them against everyday stress and loss.

Bobbie Diamond's Nail Whitener is the quick solution to embarrassing yellow discolored nails. It has gluten for extract that provides renewed strength to weak nails and breaks. Whiter than smoothens out the nail surface with a nice buffer over that helps removal discoloration, bringing fresh nails' healthy look.

Finishing can count on Bobbie Diamond's Nail Strengthener. It has Biotin Methionine complex, which is converted for weak and fragile nails, to help nails become less brittle. Acrylic Resin ensures hardening of nails and better resistance to chips.

Meanwhile, for yellow nails, dull colors and nail polish that peels off easily, try Lo-Ion Quick Dry, a quick dry formulation of Isopropyl Alcohol which is converted for weak and fragile nails, to help nails become less brittle. Acrylic Resin ensures hardening of nails and better resistance to chips.

Whether you like your nails natural or prefer them polished with the latest and most fashionable colors, nail care is a very important component of your general well-being and attitude toward life. It is therefore in your best interest to keep them looking healthy. Mary Rosin cared for and protected through the complete line of Bobbie Diamond Collection Treatment products, which are available at Watsons outlets.

Shine-free beauty

Text and makeup by Ruchi Chan
Cover Babe

MATTE MAKEUP is the ticket to an impeccable, shine-free face.

What is 'matte makeup'? Matte means the absence of glow. Matte translates to flawless (heavier) coverage and a dried finish. It is the opposite of shimmer.

It also gives the best cover up and is much more long-lasting compared to other textures of makeup. It is ideal for oily complexions and for people with combination skin.

Word of advice though: If your oily tends to be on the oily side, matte cosmetics should be avoided. This would further emphasize the dryness and would make you look like a dried prune.

But for matte makeup, it is always best to start with a good skin. No amount of makeup can hide badly cared for skin. If you decide to use matte makeup, it is very important to refrigerate your skin regularly to make the matte finish look appealing flatly.

Once a week, exfoliation is good for normal skin, and three times a week is ideal for oily skin. Its not over-exfoliate, though, since this might strip away the skin's natural oils.

Always wear a light moisturizer first before applying makeup. Be sure to let the skin absorb the lotion before applying your makeup. But never use cream product using a facial toner or face blotter.

When choosing the foundation for your matte makeup, look for "oil-free," "semi-drier" or "oil control" in the label.

For the base, you can use powder foundation, liquid foundation (do not forget to choose an oil-free formula to get the same matte result), or pressed and you don't even need to smooth. Just blot your face and it's so good to go.

I like love the fact that it has SPF 20 for additional skin protection. Those with normal to combination skin can use the Maquillapod (liquid type of Maquicolor). For those with oily skin, stick to the powder foundation.

Maybelline's Clear Smooth Shine Free Face Powder is best for those who don't really need that much coverage but want to hide some skin imperfections. It's perfect for everyday use because, while it's very natural-looking, it covers flawlessly. Great use the days when matte powders looked and felt chalky and cakey. Most powders nowadays offer silky and velvety finishes but with the same matte effect.

Another product that is new to the Philippine market is Youngblood Mineral Foundation. A lot of people are hesitant to use mineral makeup for fear of allergies. On the contrary, mineral makeup is hypoallergenic and is actually very gentle on the skin. The Youngblood product is a loose powder and blended on to one's face using even use it as a concealer. The best part of it is it also matte lies the skin.

Matte makeup is ideal for oily complexions and for people with combination skin

Good buys

One product I've raved that works like magic is MaybeLin's Hide Perfect Pore Eliminator. It conceals pores and really reduces the shine. It is dusted on. You can apply it under makeup or a mid-drying base, or over makeup for that quick retouch.

If you are prone to blemishes, the product is perfect, too, because it has anti-inflammatory properties that soothe the skin. It's very easy to apply and can last the whole day.

If you want more coverage, sun protection and longer-lasting wear (say, up to 12 hours), then I recommend Lancome's Magnetic UV Perfect Powder. I've tried it at a wedding and I've had good feedback about it. It is fade-proof and you don't even need to smooth. Just blot your face and it's so good to go.

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Sophisticated look

Balls of thumb when applying a matte blusher. Avoid the tipple of the cheeks and bring the color further back and up—but not under—your cheekbones. For a more sophisticated look, Powder blushers are usually the ones with more luster.

This rule also applies when choosing your lips. Just look for the word matte on the label. Try MAC Powder Blush.

When applying matte lipstick, outline lips with a lip pencil first and then fill. Blend the edges with a rubber tip smudging tool. For a lip brush when applying matte lipstick (preferably of the same shade to avoid lip liner). MAC in Nigella is the most natural-looking matte lipstick I've tried.

Some matte lipsticks can feel dry. To counteract this, smooth on some lip balm first, leave on for a few seconds then blot away before applying the lipstick.

E-mail author at ly_martin@yahoo.com

Going On

Lolo & Lola dance contest

SEPT 9 is GRANDPARENT'S DAY. To celebrate the event, a ballroom dancing competition for lolos and lolas will be held at the Carousel Court of Fairfield Equestrian Park in the auspices of the Rambolgiet Council of the Philippines. Grandparents and lolas get better. Festival Equestrian is in Filinvest Corporate City, Alabang, Muntinlupa City. Call 8020134 and 8020135, www.theforestregion.com.ph/fe.

TRAVEL MART. The 18th Philippine Travel Mart will be held at SM Megamall, 3M Megahalls Hall, Sept. 7-9, 10 a.m.–9 p.m. The fair will showcase the booths of 3M International Corporation's premiere eco-tourist destination, Bicolandia Coast, and the SMX Convention Center. We first privately-run wine tasting and convention center.

CONCERT. Chi Mai will present French baritone Philippe Fenn for Chorale of Chi Mai's doubling fund project, on Sept. 9, 7 p.m., at the Pilo, and Life Theatre, 106 Avenue Mandaluyong. Call 5916560.

HOLIDAY TREAT. Diamond Hotel hosts a three-day mall-wide sale on Sept. 14, 15, and 16. Avail of the 50 percent discount on selected items. "Bayag at Tunay Lihong Pangkatuhaya" demonstrations are held every Saturday at Cayetano Blvd. Memorial Golf Course by Eastland Nationwide Theatre city of the month. Call 710-1000-7000.

JOB FAIR. The PWA sale in Hilton with the Department of Labor and Employment and the PESO of Muntinlupa City, will hold such fair, Sept. 29-30 at the Festival Supermall, Filinvest, Alabang. Call 8200344, 8200345, 8200346, 8200347 or 0927-7220918 for details.

SEMINARS. GEO Creative Training and Management will hold the following seminars: "Effective Supervisory Skills" (Sept. 8, 9 a.m.–5 p.m.); Conducting Effective Employee Orientation (Oct. 10, 9 a.m.–5 p.m.); Understanding Performance Management Framework (Oct. 11, 9 a.m.–5 p.m.); Effective Business Correspondence (Sept. 14, 9 a.m.–5 p.m.); Developing Excellent Business Communication Skills (Sept. 22, 9 a.m.–5 p.m.). Call 8887866, 8702338, 8234825.

POSTGRADUATE COURSE. The Department of Pediatrics, Philippine General Hospital University of the Philippines and Child Foundation Inc. will hold its 2007 post-graduate course "Schizophrenia: Advances in Neonatal Pediatrics," Sept. 12-13, at the Century Park Hotel. Call 5248982 or 5218488 loc. 2101 or 2107.

THREE LUCKY WOMEN. Mr. Gerald Vergara, Joan Balog and Nevelita Mercedes are the winners in Sun Cellular's LU Chat. While proprietor, Vergara, a 24-year-old sales and marketing associate, and Balog, a 30-year-old product information representative, got an iPod Nano each. Sharing other winner Nevelita Mercedes, 32, is the winner of a trip to Boracay. All three are users of Sun Messenger that allows subscribers to send and receive unlimited messages with their MOL, SOL MSN, and Yahoo! Subscribers just need an existing SM account to do this. Visit www.suncellular.com.ph. Mig Inoe ph/web, tel. 5808000.

GARDEN SHOW
The Philippine Orchid Society (POS) will host its mid-year Orchid and Garden Show in conjunction with Expo. 10 at the Orchidarium Park, Quezon City Complex. Dilimon Cabrera (1-448-1466, 9294425 or e-mail carmabrial@philorchidsociety.org for details.

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Take breathtaking videos with the new Canon ZR series MiniDV camcorders. The highly affordable ZR 850, ZR 830 and ZR 800 are all loaded with powerful and user-friendly capabilities and features like a 30x optical zoom, superior high-resolution (4:3) 1-inch color image Stabilizer (OIS), Canon Video Lens, and the exclusive DIGIC DV processor. You will surely be taking dramatic and high-quality footage with these sleek MiniDV camcorders.

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Beauty adjustments as the season changes

WE HAD JUST LEFT spring and summer, and we are now entering autumn (September-November); then we shall proceed to winter (December-February).

As the weather gets cooler, clothing and makeup will become more formal and iconic in richer, more dramatic tones and textures. I am no-fuss in the fashion department but I can help you heavy-wise.

Autumn winter is actually my favorite season because there is a marked difference between day-wear makeup and evening dress; it's sort of like having a secret identity where you are all natural or professional by day and then transforming yourself in whatever you want to be after hours.

Ms Asians are actually in our element as our natural coloring is made for these rich warmer and deeper colors.

Gone are the shimmery pastels and lip gloss often suited for only the very young, exceptionally beautiful or Caucasians, while we Orientals look puffy or washed out. We can never wear the darkest lipsticks to nude that do not come in sheer form and it makes all the difference in our look when worn even with makeup-free skin.

Need us to clue yourself on the rules and remedies?

1. Learn the nude/neutral makeup, but don't be too comfortable with red lipstick. Wash on your eye area instead. Us brunettes

MAKEOVER 911

Kirsty Sales

NUDE LIPS. Make Up For Ever transparent 402, Chantilly Smoke Beige, Fashion 21 Color Mousse brown on Plum and brushless in Pale Mauve

LA MER Treatment Creme Foundation SPF 15, Make Up For Ever Liquid Lift foundation, Bourjois Universal Source digare Foundation and Wrinkle Radiance, and Fanny Garnace Crème Mousse Foundation

on the eyelines and define the brows. In fact, you can even go paler with your choice of lipstick as long as you put proper emphasis on the eyes. Try eyeliner crayons/sources which will last you two to three months and will even eat your eye makeup time by some 10 minutes.

For nondrying nude lipstick, you may try Make Up For Ever in 402, Guerlain Kisses de Beige, Revlon Nude Velvet, Guerlain Pale Pink, and Fashion 21 Color Mood in Intense Plum. Drink Beige for only P350.

Eyebrow/mascara options for those who do not want extensions: Shiseido Pro Long Mascara, Avon Perfect Wear mascara, Lancome Flormocils and Maybelline EXLash.

For eyeshadow, I use a shimmy eyeliner brush and quality eye shadow for staying power and smear prevention. Mix Orgasm bronzer, gray or black eye shadows are best for this; it can also fill in eyebrows.

Those who like pastels will love the glide and rich pigment of NARS, Shiseido, Shu Uemura and Lancome pencils.

2. Regarding foundation adjustment, those who have oily skin are jumping for joy by now as they get to keep the matte, look-finish longer. But those in their late 20s with normal to dry skin and lines are dismayed by the show of age as sheer foundation refuses to blend in and settles into fine lines, emphasizing the wrinkles.

Anti-aging

Use foundation with anti-aging treatment like La Mer Treatment Creme Foundation SPF 15 (P5,500). La Mer creams have miracle ingredients so you are actually wearing your skin while looking pretty.

Few may also try the Bourjois control/correct figure variable definition makeup primer (P500). It gives dull, dry skin a glow and diffuses the appearance of wrinkles.

Meanwhile, the Secret Agent Under cover makeover (P1,950) will entice. Huge pigmentation, Make Up For Ever Liquid Lift Foundation will check the early stages of skin aging. Fanny Instant Crème Mousse foundation (P875) provides ample coverage that blends but does not settle into fine lines and looks like nothing on.

3. For those who sweat glamour, in order to prevent the old-maid or unapproachable schoolmarm look, try deep-colored lipstick on. Women with glasses tend to disappear under the frames even if they are the right shape.

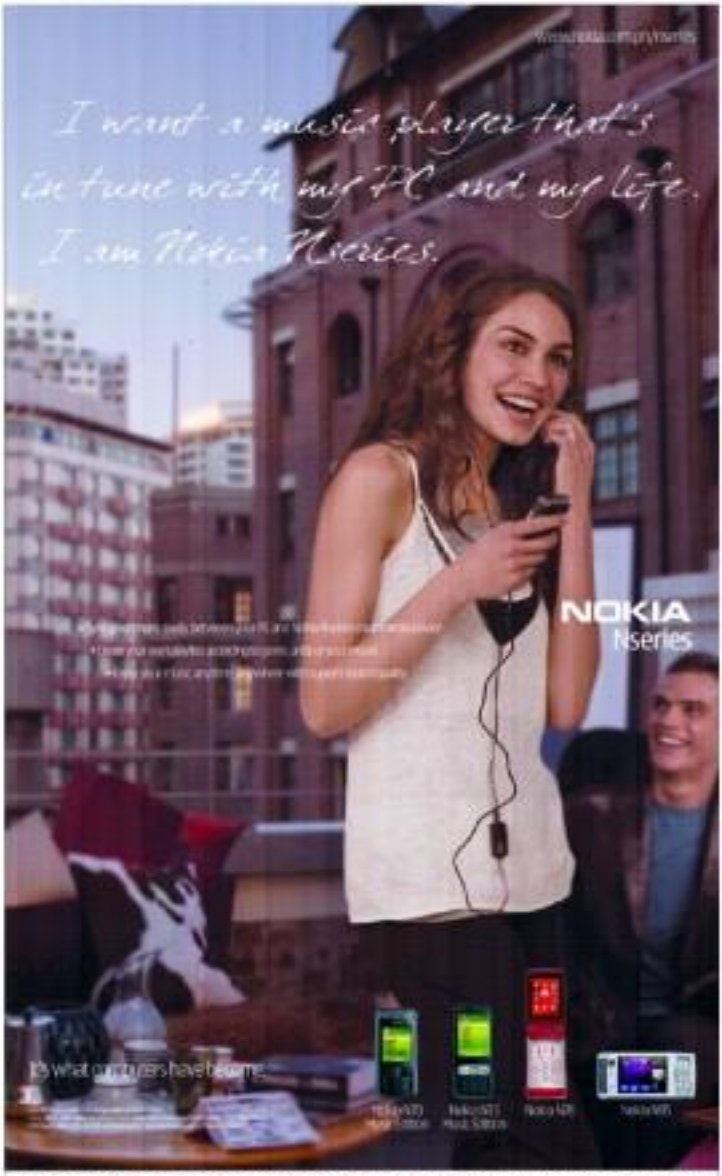
If you wear dark-colored or metallic frames, like black, gunmetal and tortoise shell, wear medium to deeper shades. Keep the makeup on the rest of the face minimal when you wear glasses as all you need is a smoky, teal, red, plum or brown velvet lipstick shade for your face to appear. The effect is actually sexy. Like in those movies where the heroine takes off her glasses, yanks out her ponytail and looks really hot!

Choice lipsticks: Reds—Fashion 21 Colour Mood in Red Apple (blush red) or Wild Cherry (deep red), P350 each; Shu Uemura 901 202 (vampire red); Revlon Crushed Velvet Choco Lust (deep reddish brown); or Bamboo (beige tinsmy gloss).

Check out the Fashion 21 Colour Mood Lipsticks at Watsons. These are very reasonably priced at only P350. They have rich pigmented, nondrying colors perfect for your chilly times.

If there is a shade you just want to try out for the season, buy cheap or reasonably priced lipstick and makeup. Don't waste money. If it is a shade you wear regularly and can finish up, splurge on the luxurious brands.

E-mail the author at kirsysales@yahoo.com



Available at the following Nokia Stores nationwide: Greenhills 1, Glorietta Digital Xchange, Tomas Morato, Festival Mall, SM City North Edsa, Galleria Bacoor, Gateway Mall, Robinsons Manila, Robinsons Galleria, SM Davao, Ayalalland City, Lim Ket Kai Center (LKC), Subang Town Center, SM Mall of Asia, Pacific, Greenhills, SM City Cebu, SM Iloilo, SM Bacolod, Rockwell, Ayalalland High Street, Bonifacio, Trinoma, SM Batangas

DRAMATIC DEEP LIPS. Fashion 21 Red Apple, Sweet Raisin; Shu Uemura 901 202, Fashion 21 Color Mood in Wild Cherry

FASHION

LIFESTYLE

Editor: Chris Baral-Fernando
Contributing Editors
Jenni Aguenza
and Agnes Aileen Ballesteros

Gear up!

45 years
Metrobank

Philcharter: Moving Forward

Over the last couple of years, the insurance industry experienced a softening as evidenced by a decreasing number of industry players, from 121 in 2000 to 95 in 2001. Notwithstanding challenges, Philippine Charter Insurance Corporation (PhilCharter) generated close to a billion in premium volume last year, placing it among the top non-life insurance companies in the Philippines.

Currently, its ownership structure stands with majority control owned by Metrobank and the remaining twenty percent owned by Sumitomo Inc. Co Ltd. The company has an authorized capital of P500 million, with total assets of P3,300 Mn.

PhilCharter stands by its 47 years of commitment and responsibility to the various markets it serves. Its track record to claims settlement has earned the trust and respect of the industry and its growing number of customers.

PhilCharter takes a fresh perspective in the industry through market expansion and continuous product development. To bring in new customers, the company embarked on intensive product trainings for agents covering its network of 13 branches nationwide. To promote new products, the company engages in sales drives regularly. PHILCharter believes that in opening up new markets, it has to also fresh approaches in addressing the growing needs of its customers. Thus, it formed strategic product tie-ups and beneficial partnerships with other members of the Metrobank Group including Metrobank Card Corporation, Orix Metro Leasing Corporation, and Philippine Savings Bank.

At the forefront of providing innovative products in its category, it is currently providing Baysalang Plus Emergency Insurance, a special insurance package exclusively for Overseas Filipino Workers. It also introduced Global Travel Security, a comprehensive comprehensive insurance product for travelers. The company tailor fits its services for special market needs like Home Security, Business Security and Auto Security.

Offering convenience to policyholders, its branches are strategically located nationwide providing complete one-stop shop insurance services. Other channels to serve customers are also being developed. Soon, customers can also experience the benefits of online insurance services through its new website.

Recognizing that good people are important in a successful organization, PhilCharter values employee performance and productivity. Its attractive rewards, a productivity tool in the organization.

Above all, the trust and confidence of its policyholders are PHILCharter's foundation for strong performance and leadership. It will continue to work on its vision of being the company of choice providing the best insurance solutions that exceed customer expectations.

The PhilCharter head office is located at ground and second floors, Skyland Plaza, San Gil Puyat Avenue corner Trapiche Street, Makati City. For inquiries, please call 580-MAX (connecting all departments). For sales, please call 580-8975, 580-8982, 580-8983 or for claims, call 580-8667, 580-8959. PhilCharter branches are located at Binondo, Quezon City, Kalookan, Alabang, Marikina, Caloocan, Baguio, Tarlac, Naga, Davao, Iloilo and Cebu. Cagayan de Oro, Cebu, Bacolod, and Iloilo.

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FIRE MOTOR CAR MARINE PERSONAL ACCIDENT BONDS CASUALTY ENGINEERING

Wet-weather essentials

Add some rainy-day staples to update your erstwhile summery frocks

By Bianca Custodio
Contributor

THERE WILL COME/ soft rains and the smell of the ground," wrote the poet Sara Teasdale. "And swallows circling with their shimmering sound; and frogs in the pools singing at night, and wild plum-trees in tremulous white."

While the rainy season can pose images of misty cities and romantic showpieces, getting caught in a rain shower is enough to make you forget yourself and curse the miserable days (or worse, if your favourite shoes and designer handbag are drenched as well).

There are some things you understandably have to give up with the onset of the rainy season: lightweight flip-flops, skimpy outerwear, and paper-thin white tops (unless you want to show off your underwear in a sudden downpour).

However, you don't have to exchange all your dresses and shoes for long-sleeved tops and jeans. With some tweaking, your regular wardrobe can be used all year round. All you have to do is add some rainy-day essentials to update your erstwhile summery frocks.

In fact, wearing dresses and shoes can sometimes be more practical than jeans when braving any rain + rain shower. To avoid getting the hems of your pants wet, opt to wear shorts or dresses paired with Wellingtons and a coat; that way, you'll prevent ruining a pair of expensive shoes (since Wellingtons are maintenance-free) and getting mud spattered on your legs as well.

For those who love the '60s flat-pop look, the rainy season is the best time to get away with the short dress and boots ensemble.

However, when you wear dresses to go out, keep in mind that a mid-length coat is essential; you wouldn't want your dress to get assailed by the rain. Also, the coat will provide enough warmth to compensate for the lack of material around your legs if you're not wearing pants.

Practicality is your best friend during the rainy season; make sure you always have an umbrella with you even on sun-scorched days, since you don't know if the weather will take a turn for the worse at the end of the day.

Choose a small, portable umbrella that you can easily stash in a bag/handbag. You can also opt to bring a raincoat with you to protect yourself from the showers, since an umbrella won't be able to cover you completely. That way, you'll be able to nail into school or work with a dry outfit while the rest of your colleagues will have to spend the good part of an hour trying to get themselves dry.

While you needn't be able to wear suede or high-quality leather as often as you'd like during the rainy season, seize the opportunity to add some international influences and variety to your wardrobe. After all, in the Philippines, it isn't everyday that you can wear boots and a trench coat without getting laughed out of the country.

E-mail the author at bianca.custodio@yahoo.com

Waterproof tote
Let it all out—in a clear plastic tote, that is. Since you wouldn't want your leather handbags to get drenched in the rain, bring a waterproof tote instead wherever you go, so you can store your things without worrying about getting your bag wet. Plastic tote from Pinoy Plastic

Cute umbrella
A generic black umbrella screams "generic lady." Pick an umbrella that's light, functional, and, most importantly, fun. Bright colors and quirky designs will make you easy to spot in a crowd. White dress with black borders, Banana Org (0915-3780731), rain boots by Pinoy, umbrella, Bazaar's Department Store

A pair of rain boots
Great for bursting mud-filled puddles, Wellingtons, or Wellies for short, are rubber boots that first became popular in the UK. Wellies by Pinoy, e-mail pinoyrunwells@gmail.com or contact (0917-8175842).

Photography Tom Labrador
Styling Bianca Custodio
Makeup Tatin Yang of Lancome using Phyllosi Kiamo collection
Hair Tony Dimich of L'Oreal Professionnel
Model Emely Fortin of Look Models

Raincoat
You usually see them on traffic policemen, but don't knock raincoats until you've tried them. They'll keep you dry when an umbrella fails. To avoid being mistaken for an MMDA traffic guide, don't go for the bright-orange choice. Pick a more subdued color such as blue, and pair it with bright colors for the rest of your wardrobe. Orange dress from Banana Org (0915-3780731), sneakers, Valiery Intercontinental, SM Department Store

Light trench coat
Want to battle Ingrid Bergman from "Casablanca"? Then add a dose of lamour style into your wardrobe with a short trench coat to wear with dresses and pants. Black trench coat, Jenny Backer's black cap, Topmanmen orange graphic dress, Yellow (0917-5770438)

FASHIONFLASH FASHIONFLASH

Shop for sight

Shared Vision for a Clear Future

IDEAL VISION HAS LAUNCHED WITH select Rotary Club chapters the Gift Sight Program.

The program has been going on for decades now, conducting free eye clinics and providing free eyewear to indigents around the country.

This year, the program seeks to involve shoppers in the cause.

In celebration of the annual Sight Saving Month, Ideal Vision Center is donating one pair of eyeglasses (frames) to the Gift of Sight Project for any customer purchase of eyewear/optical products.

Participating Ideal Vision Stores include Old Megamall, Banson, Shoemuseum, Mall of Asia, Pampanga, Clark, Lucena, South Edsa, Fairview Makati, Manila, Isetan, Xen Luzon and Greenpoint; Ever Sorsogon and Commonwealth; Ilo. Lanta East Grand Mall Festival Mall; and Ideal Vision Center, Walterson Makati.

The year of the dress

THERE'S NOTHING LIKE A DRESS TO showcase femininity and womanliness. In SM, dresses are celebrated in the prettier, more sophisticated and seasonless styles.

Classic silhouettes are given a fresh spin with the season's biggest trends—ruffled waists, mini to midi lengths, subtle sheen and playful prints.

How to get your dressed? Here are some tips from SM.

• Fabric. It's Coco Chanel today so let us not be simple. Bold power dresses return to fabrics showing a lot of attention to ease of movement and comfort. Come beige, navy and black pieces can go anywhere, day or night.

• Little black dress. Immortalized by the legendary Audrey Hepburn, the little black dress remains a timeless piece.

• Wrap. Diane von Furstenberg made quite an impact on the fashion world when she introduced her knitted jersey wrap dress in 1970s. Fashion remains wrapped up today as we fresh new variations for the modern woman—in jersey and charmeuse versions, as well as in full-skirted cutie couture.

• Shift or sheath. Hubert Givenchy designed the sack dress in the 1950s, sparking a trend that led to the sheath and later on waistless shift dresses. A decade later, Mary Quant began the mini shift dress revolution. The shift and the sheath are two of the most popular dress styles...both have sleek silhouettes and lots of sophistication.

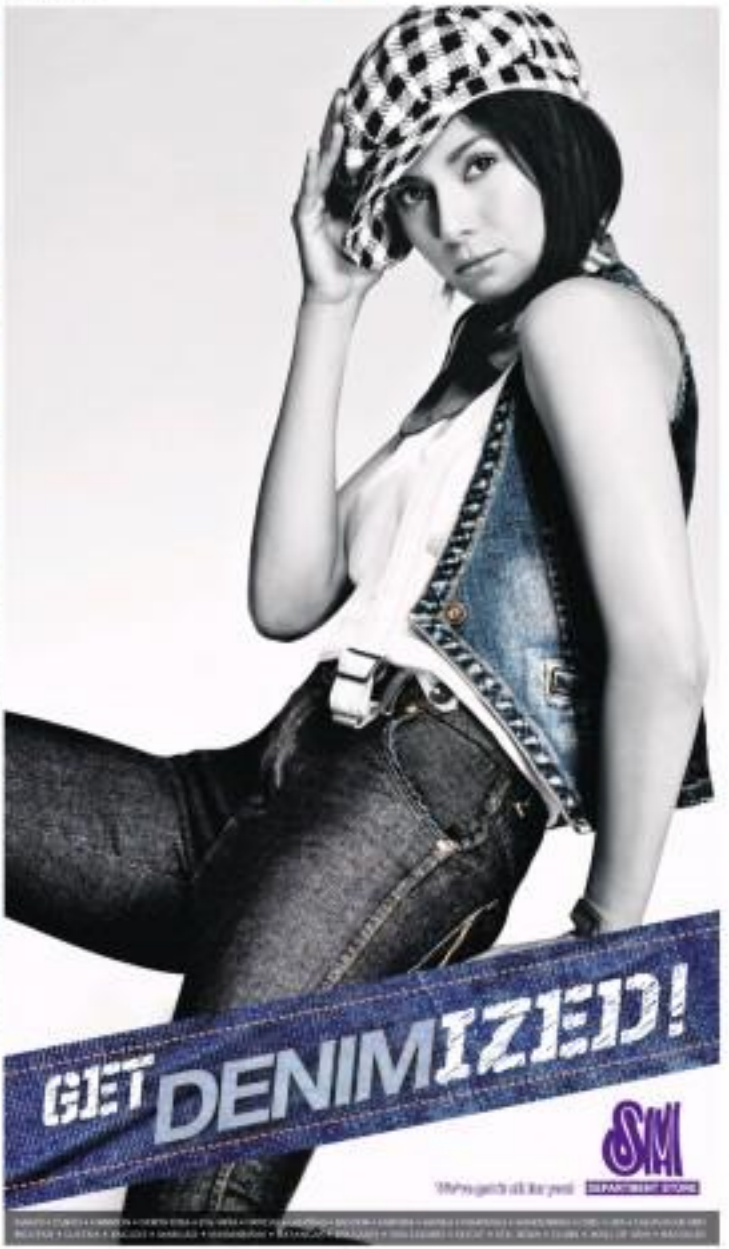
What's the difference? While the shift clearly lacks waist definition, the sheath puts the spotlight firmly on the waist without bands or belts. There have been updated today with more defined shapes, allowing for slits and medium sure bustier or fabric belts to mark the waist.

• Baby doll. This dress celebrates less spotlessness with its empire waist and shorter skirt. There's a little girl charm, an ingénue sentiment to it for sure.

The dress collection is available at the Ladies Wear department of all SM stores.

Available at SM Department Store:

GOLDEN empire



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FASHION BUZZ
Hot, haute, hot news!

KC Concepcion, the new Bayo girl

TAKING HER PLACE IN LOCAL fashion history. After Jha Alano of Lea Salonga, Dianne'ne Golangco, Kristine Medel and Rachel Alejandro as model-favored celebrity, KC Concepcion, takes on Bayo's latest endorsee.

KC comes in at the perfect time for the beloved thinking fashion label, which is about to categorize its chiffon tube blow clothes, basic blazing, French and Classic looks, all set for this October.

Fresh from graduation in Paris, which she has called home for the past few years, KC is back for good with newfound energy for the many projects waiting for her in Manila. "Bayo expects go beyond commercial endorsements and photo shoots, since she is also actively involved in charity work. Yes, KC, the new Bayo girl, she proudly has celebrity status with endorsers.

Best of all, she is absolutely home-grown! Bayo is justifiably proud of its tradition of using Filipinas to endorse the brand.

K

BVLGARI

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Bulgari offers a new, exclusive line of precious watches for the women of the world. Inspired by the 1950s, **Assioma D** takes off from the successful introduction of the original Assioma Collection and evokes the characteristics of the contemporary woman it is designed for.

Each design encapsulates the glamour of the contemporary **diva**, the irresistible allure of a **shield** and the purity and exclusivity of **diamonds**. This new Assioma D line comes in yellow gold, rose gold and white gold versions that are embellished with diamond pave. Three unique pieces in baguette-cut diamonds, sapphires and rubies complete the collection in an excellent interpretation of refined femininity.

Assioma D is now available in Manila. Visit Bulgari Boutiques: B700 Shopping Arcade, (632) 7108 and Greenbelt 4, (632) 757-2837 and Bulgari Watch Corners: Rustan's Makati Supermarket, (632) 892-2882; Rustan's Power Supermarket, (632) 721-7779 and Rustan's Alabang Town Center, (632) 850-2864

LIFESTYLE FASHION

Modern masters

For close to four decades now, Auggie Cordero's supremely confident, romantic but contemporary designs have dominated Philippine fashion

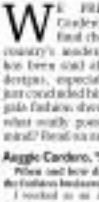
Conclusion

WE PRESENT AUGGIE Cordero, our fourth and final cluster in one of the country's modern masters. Much has been said about him and his designs, especially since he had just concluded his much-publicized gala fashion show last month. But what really goes on this master's mind? Read on and find out.

Auggie Cordero, 'Supremo' of style

When and how did you get started in the fashion business?

I worked as an apprentice for Eraine Gonzaga for about two years. Then, I tried working for a fashion salon, but I didn't get paid. That was in the late sixties. I worked for three months for one shop, then to other three months for another shop. I would get disappointed and I would think to myself, parents kasi, this is not a good business.



APPLES' PICKINGS

Apples Alterio-Sadiwaui

What's your educational background. Did you study fashion?

I was not allowed to study anything related to fashion. I studied commerce. Before, if your parents were OFWs, you had to be a CPA. It was very traditional. And you can't just tell your parents, 'You can't tell them you have other dreams that you want to pursue.

When did you know that this is what you wanted to do?

When I was 7 years old, when I saw movies with costumes and princesses. At that time there were no museum materials. There were no books on fashion, no costumes. Basta kung pa go to the lola's movies, wala naman anything to do with fashion.

My drawings then would be very small heads and bodies with a dot in lip in the head pages. I realized then I was fascinated with those things because maybe I wanted to make clothes.

When I told my parents that I wanted to go into this area, they knew I was gearing towards design. It is not that I wanted to do, but they told me that it was not a profession. Because they didn't know any better.

I mean I even allowed to drawn. Sa dinner if I ditched. So, I would pull-out my doodles on a napkin there. I would sketch the whole afternoon, then I would pull-out it so they wouldn't know. All my allowances would go to bond paper and pencils, and colored pencils.

How long did you work for different fashion houses before you established your own?

One and a half years and then I didn't work for another year. I got disillusioned. I thought I couldn't survive with this kind of work. I didn't do anything or work for anybody. For more than a years. But if it's your calling, you really want to do it, right no undergrass, at least you'll be fulfilled.

So, I worked for another company. Oh naman ben they asked me to sign a contract. I thought this was my big break to expand it, but I didn't realize that they would control me for two years. I would work more than 12 hours a day.

But I insisted here to go to Divisoria everyday, buy the tela, buy the thread, buy everything. And then I'll ask the cutters to cut and then in the afternoon, the client would already fit the dresses.

What's your design philosophy?

Along the way you develop a certain style that you embrace and it's distinctively

TURN TO E2

First Metro Investment Corporation - A Catalyst for Growth of the Philippine Capital Markets

With a solid track record that reflects bold investments both by the government and the private sector coupled with a history of exceptional financial performance, First Metro Investment Corporation has been recognized as a leading financial institution specializing in investment banking services.

As the investment banking arm of Metropolitan Bank & Trust Co. (Metrobank), it is the distinction of being the only publicly listed investment house among the 60 member institutions of the Investment House Association of the Philippines (IHAP).

Leadership for First Metro Investment Corporation's (FMIC) solid financial results is further enhanced by its consistently exhibited sound fundamentals, a net income of Php1.07 billion in 2006, return on equity of 14.3% and Php29.2 billion in total assets, as well as a 49% share of the debt securities market. The Company believes that effective leadership lies in its ability to develop capital markets through continuous product development.

First Metro Investment takes pride in establishing the established market in the country, distributing Php69.3 billion or 15% of the aggregate Php373 billion retail treasury bonds (RTBs) issued. It has very recently underwritten government bonds as well as arranging the Ayala Corporation Php7.3 billion retail bonds, the first widely-distributed retail bond by a private company. The success of these deals were proof of the Company's wide distribution network backed by the SM Metrobank branches as well as its two marketing desks in Makati and Binondo that reaches out to institutional funds and private clients.

First Metro with a consortium clients to construct power the way to the country's first local currency hybrid capital and the first peso-denominated shares listed on the stock exchange, in the form of the Ayala Preferreds. It was also lead manager and joint bookrunner for the Asian Development Bank (ADB) Php6.5 billion bond issue, the first Triple A-rated peso-denominated supranational bond issuance.

First Metro Investment's industry-building efforts are validated by the numerous awards it continues to receive as Best Bond House and Best Investment Bank.

Empowering Performance

FIRST METRO INVESTMENT CORPORATION

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Metrobank

Toyota Financial Gets Quasi-bank License

TOYOTA FINANCIAL Services Philippines Corporation (TFSPH), the nation's second largest financing company, recently secured approval from the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) to engage in quasi-banking functions.

TFSPH obtained a quasi-bank license from BSP as it celebrated its fifth year of productive operations. The BSP-approved functions enable it to undertake long-term borrowings of quasi-banking institutions borrowings of quasi-banking institutions in February 2007 after seven years of suspension. TFSPH is the first institution to be granted a quasi-banking license since the freeze order was lifted.

In its latest diversification to position in the growing car financing market, TFSPH has also increased its capital by P600 million. The company received from its stockholders the total amount of P600 million representing the aggregate subscription price for the 6 million shares issued to the corporation out of its authorized capital stock.

TFSPH is 60% owned by Toyota Financial Services Corporation (TFSC), a leading financial services group focused in Japan and wholly-owned by Toyota Motor Corporation. The Metrobank Group holds 40%, with Philippine Savings Bank (PSBank) ownership at 25% and Metropolitan Bank & Trust Company (Metrobank) owning 15%. PSBank is a subsidiary of Metrobank.

As part of Toyota's global network of sales finance companies, TFSPH services the customers of Toyota through financing and leasing services, as well as wholesale financing for Toyota dealers. TFSPH aims to become the foremost financing arm of choice for Toyota.

Established in August 2002, TFSPH has grown aggressively servicing over 17,000 customers from only 5,400 in 2006. The company posted net income of P66.7 million in its fiscal year 2007.

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LIFELONG STUDENT. "The moment the ego takes over your personality, you're not a learner/being anymore. Ang pagpapakumbaba, dapat lang nasa'yo ang ginagawa mo!"

Modern masters

From page E1

years. In the '70s, I discovered books, museums—that was the time when coffee-table books were available.

I realized that there were so many things lacking in me. I felt so inadequate. I wasn't able to finish college so if I wanted to do this, I wanted a mind that would be able to absorb what's there to read and remember.

That time, I realized that it's not just a matter of making clothes. You have to know what you're doing. You have to know the era, the history, the fabrics.

You have to learn and you have to be passionate about learning. You should be able to discuss things with anybody and know what you're talking about. And the younger designers from painters, designers, and the like.

When I saw my first exhibition abroad, I didn't realize that they could exhibit clothes. It was an awakening for me that this was serious. It's not just about making and delivering clothes. It's an eye-opener and there's a never-ending process of learning. You have to learn and study.

But what makes a garment Inggie Cordero? What are those elements?

Feminine, romantic, very sensual. I don't like clothes that would overpower a person. I want clothes that would complement the one wearing the clothes. I want it very feminine, lady-like.

What was the defining moment in your career?

'You have to be passionate about learning. You should be able to discuss things with anybody and know what you're talking about'

In 1973 when I did a small assortment of collection—Great Evening ... at the Hyatt. I knew I was on the right path. With enough rewards, enough work, I knew I could make a go of my career. The clientele kept on increasing. I would meet society people, well-dressed women.

When you're young and you appear in the papers almost every week, it feels the ego. But you realize also along the way, that you have to be grounded, because the moment the ego takes over your personality, you're not a human being anymore. Ano ang pagpapakumbaba, dapat lang nasa'yo ang ginagawa mo!

I feel that humility is one part of me career that sometimes makulang ma overpower ng success. It's easy to make money you meet so many important people, so them feed your ego.

But at the same time, you have to think that even if you're well known now, you're successful now, what's going to happen when you go down?

You have to add and not subtract. You have to keep pace with the competition and at the same time, you have to know when you make basis.

Why, in your opinion, are you considered one of Manila's modern masters?

It's up to other people to say it because I, even now, still have to prove myself and show what I can do in the fashion industry. It's a never-ending process because the moment you become complacent, wala na. Yes, have to be aware of what you can do and how you can improve your craft.

It's flattering to be emulated by young designers. But at the same time, you cannot let them down. Sometimes it's scary. The moment you become predictable, overambition ...

Who are the designers you consider masters?

Issac, Joe... upcoming, Enzo Cesar. Sir came from the old school of designing. You have to learn to satisfy your client, you have to know their dresses' lifestyles. You cannot just make a dress that's not within that lifestyle and not within their taste.

Even if a dress is beautiful but a client says that's not me or it does not suit me, it's no use. I'm no fashion victim. You have to make it a point that when they wear your dress, they'll be proud. There you sold also. They'll trust you to choose the dress and jewelry.

How have you adapted to the changing times and fashions? How do you hone your craft?

We have to do research every time. Besides the visuals, you also have to read. Next week, I have a new book coming, "The History of Stylistic Photography."

What else do you want to achieve in this industry?

Wow! Make more clothes that are different from what others are doing.

At this point in time, you're thinking of when to call it quits, when you have to say "I have to close shop, I don't want to work anymore." But you want to leave a legacy that they'll remember you by.

I really love what I do. If you don't love what you do and you're only after the money and the glamour, nothing will happen in you. I never liked the glamour of my profession.

How would you describe the local fashion industry?

There's none, in the strict sense of the word. But we have enough talent, having. Can you imagine if there were so many things available here?

Before Thailand was just wala tong emse yan; Bali is today Hong Kong was the only competition, but they were afraid of us. Just now, even Vietnam and Cambodia are doing well.

What should be done to improve its condition?

The government is not clear if we can bring in materials. I thought the government would help the industry because [fashion] could be a money maker.

The good government support and leeway. Plus, definite rules about importation of materials.

It's cheaper to bring in materials from abroad, even if my baggage is overweight 120 kilos, because here the materials are 10 times the price. One thing I cannot understand in Manila is that they'll charge you more if you're a designer and charge you less if you're a dressmaker. They'll say, "maybe do ganito, ganoon ah."

Actually abroad, like New York, you cannot enter any of the wholesale shops. Outside is sayo wholesale. Ganito sasabihin, if you're a designer, you register with them and you get as much as 50-75 percent discount.

What are the strengths of local designers?

Their minds, their creativity and their resourcefulness. With the conditions, they become resourceful.

Weaknesses?

They are easily daunted by time. Multo'ap 'yan. If you get glowing reviews in the papers and all those bangets-an who say na ang galing mo, if you start believing all those things, that's your downfall. At the end of the day depot ang tapin na sagumbatan nila ay damit ko. Pero inaapreciate ba talaga?

What makes you proud to be a Pinoy fashion designer?

I make Filipinas happy! When my bride cries because she's happy about her wedding gown, and she tells me "Inggie, na-fulfill mo ang fantasy ko," that makes me proud. It's simple, and yet you know you'll always be a part of their whole life because you've made their biggest moment, the happiest moment of their life. Those things are worth more than the money they pay you.

Would you have it any other way? Exchange all this for a simpler, more quiet existence?

I did that 20 years ago. I know the key to my happiness—a simple, non-complicated existence, all the friends you can get, all the kind words you get from people who respect you, with your dignity intact.

Inggie Cordero
337 Shaw Street, Mobile Manila; tels. 5351997, 3231452

Photographs Joe de Leon
Styling Editor Mike Arroyo
Grooming Perch Reyes
Photo Assistants Adrian Cameron, Ramon B. Joseph Grupo Wings Photography
Image Manipulation Adrian Cameron Wings Photography
Inggie Cordero's Prop EDNY Bronx TV Special Thanks To Kate Dyan (EDNY)

Say aloha to Moana

Sun drenched Fighting Eel

Viewpage E4

end, the chain would circle the world 50 times! Talk about taking over the world, one tote/at at a time.

Hot swimwear

Still on sun, drenched Board, Chi Martinez is the latest beachwear production company to Brand. Considered the hottest and most sought after swimwear line in their country, Chi Martinez was launched by Bonny Gomez in 1999.

In Chi Martinez, Gomez creates a unique marriage of technology and style, with detailed handwork incorporated into the fabrics, coupled with fine embroidery, crystal beading and intricate lace. The brand is designed in a high-end boutique collection with very select distribution.

The swimwear collection, which has been worn by the likes of Giselle Bundchen and Miranda Cosgrove, is embellished by the most sophisticated to his day-today travelers of Board.

From Lit, Moana picked up something for all T-shirt junkies. LAMode tees are dress-home comfortable yet stylish enough for a night out. LAMode's versatile selection of tops and dresses always come with distinct details that make them easy to wear yet very fashionable: reverse seams, shaved necklines and sequin bodies.

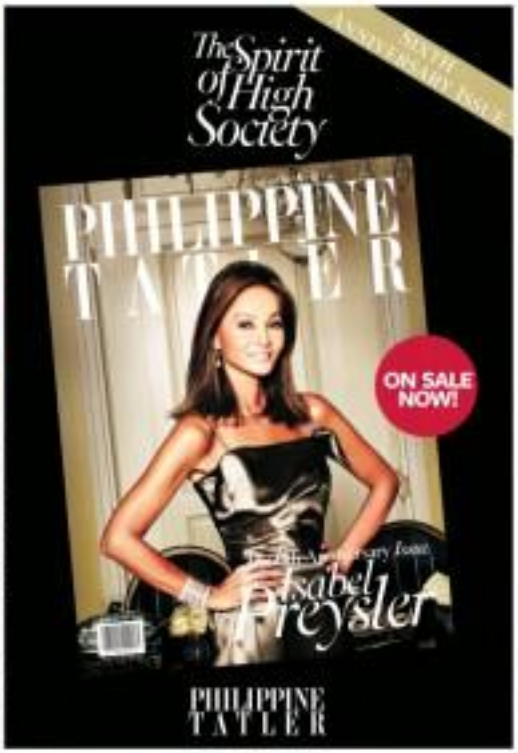
From the island that gleaties the skin, mini bands, booties, dresses, comic Fighting Eel, a creation of designers Rona Fernandez and Lisa Chang. They have combined their distinct perverted styles and there are desirable love for fashion and desire resonance to create Fighting Eel.

Created in 2000, Fighting Eel clothes can now be found in hundreds of boutiques throughout the United States. The line is a blend of sexy and simple, with swimwear, casual yet luxurious dresses and tops that are surprisingly versatile, easily worn with or the high heels or flip-flops.

Beach bums, lay out your sexy clothes on for Moana. Pose or shine, we can now all enjoy eternal sunshine in our spotless minds.

Moana is at SM Power Plant Mall, Rockwell, Makati.

E-mail the author at jbishop@inquirer.com.ph



Violets are cool Chi Martinez

Hot slipper
Pleasance "Mart." Available hot mode of September

Say aloha to Moana

This new boutique in Rockwell celebrates summer all-year round with international brands that embody fun-filled holidays and endless sun

THE rainy season always signals the introduction of some funky-sounding brands names like "Cloudwalk" or "Tropic," names that have accurately taken us by storm, literally.

But just because it's been wet, wet, wet outside doesn't mean that our dreams of sunnier days to be dampened. Cool only just with the debut of a Brazilian summery alternative named Moana Road Inc. last June.

"Moana" is Hawaiian for "open ocean," referring to the deep blue part of the ocean. It's also the name of a new boutique in Rockwell that celebrates summer all-year round. Yes, even if the floods are knee-high in the city!

The store was created in the spirit of Hawaii's carefree and easy-going lifestyle, which is something that we tropical types can absolutely relate to. It's that laid-back, breezy and easygoing style that extends from the coastline to the restaurant counters.

The different brands from all over the world that Moana carries in its boutique exemplify that spirit, including Rivieramar, LA Minks, CIA Martinez and Fighting Eel. From Brazil and Hawaii to LA and, of course, the Philippines, each label embodies a love for holidays and endless summer.

The most recognizable brand carried by Moana is, of course, Havaianas, which has become synonymous with flip-flops. In fact, you can't walk anywhere nowadays without spotting the colorful Brazilian slippers on someone's feet, whether it's in the streets of Makati or on White Beach in Boracay.

Havaianas actually means "Hawaiian" in Portuguese. Its inspiration came from the Zori, a Japanese-style sandal. The ultra-comfy, barley-soft flip-flops are fashioned out of a 42-year-old secret rubber formula.

A fun fact: Since it was launched in 1962, over 2.2 billion pairs of Havaianas have been produced and sold throughout the world! If they were laid out from end to

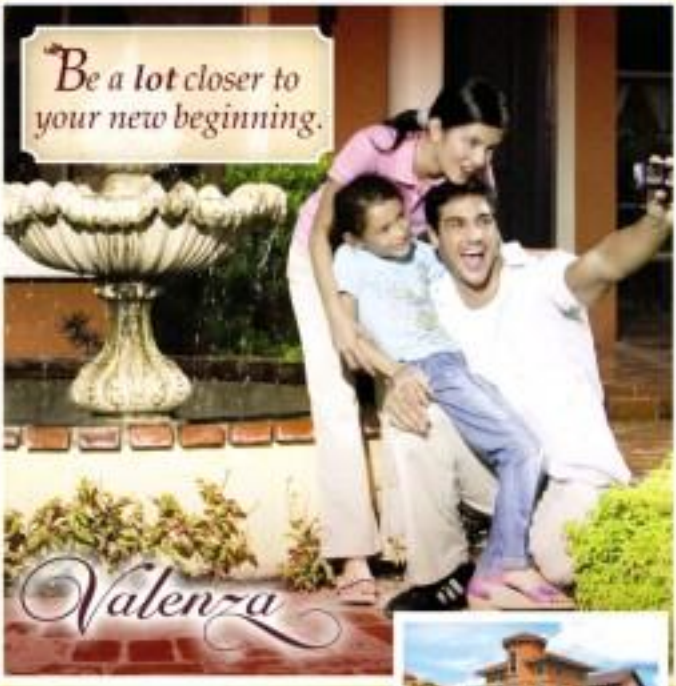
(NEXT PAGE)

Jenni Epperson

Bronzed beauty
Fighting Eel

Blanc beach
LAMinks

CROWNASIA
A Vista Land Company



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LIFESTYLE

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LIFE-STYLED
Thelma Sioson San Juan

Cebu vs Manila designers in fashion fest

Cebu designers have come into their own, while Metro Manila designers continue to forge their individual identities and innovations. Together, they show that Philippine fashion is at its competitive best again—which is timely in this globalized era.

Cebu recently showcased the solid combination of local and Manila designs when the Metro Store Hotels and Casinos staged its annual Style Month three nights of fashion collections in hotel ores by Westown general manager Marco Pineda.

It's fitth to ask who is better—the Cebu or Manila designers—because both countries is built on their unique strengths. What is notable is how each designer, Cebuano or Metro Manilan, exudes confidence in their own style and skills while sharing the ramp ground of experimentation.

Cebu and Manila make for an exciting contest in fashion design.

The first show on Aug. 24 of Samsung Style Watch featured the collections of Clothes for Life, a brand presentation of 14 Cebu designers headlined by 2007's toast of the town, Gary Santiago, who continued his trademark earthen design with some twist. The other designers of diverse styles and skills were Salvador Mateo, Harley Bautista, Ben Manabat, Joy Bernaldez, Prospero Empuerto, Marietta Tan, Edwin Ao, Edwin Alba, Ukumberto

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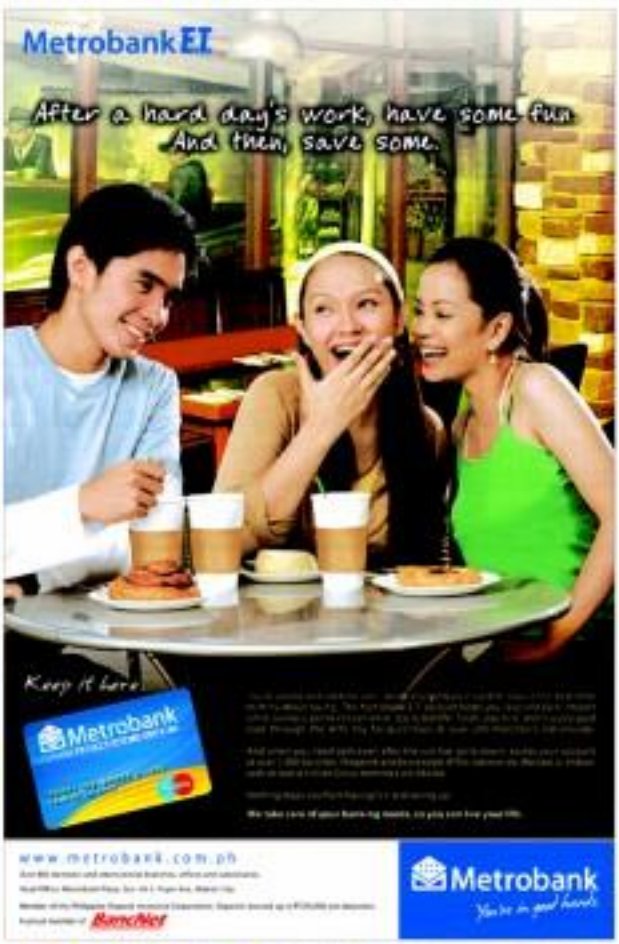

DENNIS Lumico

RANDY Ortiz

JM Escario

Cebu vs Manila designers...

From page F1

to Silkygan, Mendell Quitalig, Ray Rasos, Wynn Monpere and Alan Fonte.

The second night was the Cebu leg of the Samsung Metrowear, and it featured the fashion council of Cebu, which clearly left the audience in awe. The impressive collections displayed high standards of creativity.

Sexy Gerardo was a favorite with her play of soft and structured fabrics in black and champagne. Not good to strain was her organdy champagne maxi dress with black geometric cutouts. Sheer simplicity at its best.

In your face

If Joey's were low-key elegance, Jun Escario's clothes were in-your-face 'diva dresses, with the models' prominent curls gelled to the nines. Influences ranged in...Indian, Tribesman, African, Japanese—yet he somehow managed the heavy traffic of styles. He hinted adopt the Indian sari with the Japanese kimono fabric. He knew how to use black to set off gold detailing or metallic accents.

Philip Rodriguez had a captive audience in runners, like he has every time, mainly because his clothes are beautiful, feminine, classic, with neat workmanship. He must be Cebu's Valentino.

Seeing his collections over the years, I've come to delineate his style. He speaks in colors en-woman con-cetto, in fine fabrics such as chiffon and silk, while adding a twist. For some time, it was his "pacillos" trimmings—strips of fabrics cut like the trimmings of pacillas and sewn into various shapes; the silhouette could be either voluminous and layered or soft and figure-hugging.

This pacillas imagery has been Philip's trademark and we wouldn't be surprised if it has influenced the likes of Gary Flamingo, who's now donning an audience for strong imagery.

At Style Watch, Philip used bright jewel colors in either silk chiffon or organdy. The twist, this time, was an embellishment inspired by the paper parol. Ambers cut into concave patterns resembling parol trimmings and used to trim the hems in the dresses.

This technique was shown to full advantage the following night in the "Spiraboella"—the bridal show of Cebu and Manila designers. Philip's wedding gowns used such patterns in several, impressing even a Manila designer who compared them to pages of a book unfolding.

Oj Hofer's clothes stood out for their classic simplicity: clever draping of jersey, tulle, even velvet. Obviously, this fashion legend of many years ago has evolved. His style is now clearly defined.

Albert Arriba used cut for his appliqués and electric pleating, to agua. His clothes became visual all the more. Minette Tordesillas showed exquisite tailoring; now her women would find hard to ignore—salmon silk satin sheath gown, luscious yellow taffeta dress with puff sleeves and balloon skirt, pinkish silver layered dress with sheer bodice. Bella Blanc gowns were very rich, including a brown tiered sarong skirt. They were clearly meant for busy high-society business.

Best gowns and suits

"Spiraboella" on the last night had the best wedding gowns and groom suits we've seen in recent years. Manila's designers gave it their all. We loved Patrick Diaz's abaca terno gowns, either one-shouldered or empire cut.

Vittorio was trademark Vittorio—designer Vic Bartolome never overplays. Only he could do a mini-maxi take on a byzantine gown, this time in cream brocade. Jonathan M. Asencio showed how best he could do structures—corset bone detailing in the sleeveless shift, or in terno dress.

Rhett Kalaw's gown bore the shimmer of glitz and glamour. His fitted bodice of matte silver sequins was inspired by the seashell-cut color of Venice and set off a dramatic tulle skirt.

Dennis Lumico had a winner in cut ivory silk chiffon column gown with wide band on the bodice, its solid presence a foil to soft chiffon. Its draping at the back transformed into a floating train. Dennis is a master of silhouettes and construction.

Jojie Llorente had an off-shoulder sequin-lace gown in off-white chantilly lace and a duchesse satin gown with bubbled hem. Jojie is so sure of his style identity that he saw no need to experiment.

Randy Ortiz was clearly in a romantic mood—"Sophisticates no no man," as he put it. His silk taffeta with ruching sleeves and bustle at the back, or his sequin-lace gown with exotic embroidery were as romantic.

Anthony Nocum showed what to us were his best groom suits in recent years—they were cut close to the body, neatly structured and had fine finish. A bride should really talk her groom into such body-defining suit, for a change, so grooms don't end up looking either corporate or too fussy or like modeling fop.

Raju Laurel had skin-baring gowns of recombobulated Belgian lace. With "destination wedding" in mind, he had another gown of silk chiffon and nylon gazaza, with sweetheart neckline.

R. Bautista had a draped dress with Dikaio silk coat embedded with pearls—a masterpiece of tailoring and one native wraith, the pearl. The coat weighed about 15 lbs.

Of course, Monique Lhuillier sent her signature pieces—one of them a masterpiece of volume and draping, another a sexy gown of exquisite lace.

DJ HOFER

PHILIP Rodriguez

RHETT Kalaw

JC BUENEM

SAMSUNG'S Pia Arugay, Metro Magazine's Thelma Sanchez, socialite Dee Lopez, Waterfront Hotel's Lingo Ang and Mel Cuenca

High fashion in South's

JOHNSTO Lhuillier, Pinkpolka Young and Rose Hennessy

KAYE Lapus, Cherry Cancel and Anne Mendiola

CHEZKA Martinez, Grizelle Yap and ABS-CBN's Ervin Lapus

QUEENIE Arenas, Bonny Cuelo and Joseph Gonzales

GINGER Cotse, Sarita Pimentel and Ramon Villasis

EPOL and Thess Terry

RICO and Monique Jarque

DENNIS Lumico, Randy Ortiz, Jojie Llorente, Waterfront Hotel's Marco Polizzi, Jing Music and Anthony Nocum

Pulpoderic GM Marco Pensato, Olive

s star city

LEFT Clemente, Joy Deglaire with daughter Clarence O., and Shirley Yu

TERCERO Mendoza, Rosalind Dela, Annabelle Lopez and Bernie Rimbo

BUSINESS tycoon Michel Lhuillier with Alfred Xavier Burgos II Mandaue de Cebu

RIGHT Clemente with Paul Evers, Marc-marc and May Clemente

ITHOUT
FTING
EYELASH

Alice Sara Haagen
Model: Lara Shaye

WATERFRONT's Janine de Padua with Cebu's Miss and Mandri's pals, Casey Nixon

GINA Clemente and Manny Clemente

JANE Ong with son

LOUIS Cruz and James Jao

HARRIS Pernas with fab couple Marlene and Alfred Xavier Burgos Jr

CHINESE Chef—Tin Siew Lee Tuan Kong

JAPANESE Chef—Mitsu Kenimamura

THE HOTEL'S popular Italian Restaurant, La Gondola

on the week in.

As for shopping galavanting, there's a Crazy Five under in the hotel, Mitt Inal, Judd.

At the end of the three-day listening fete Atlantis at the Waterfront Hotel, the man who conceptualized the whole thing was all smiles. Also all smiles was the woman whose brainchild, the menswear fashion series, had become a tremendous happening for a one year-of-years now: ex Carmen Morello and Cebu. They were here other than the Waterfront GM Marco Pensato and ABS-CBN Publicity Thelma Alonzo-San Juan, who is moving on and and opening another exciting chapter of her colorful life palengque.

For more info on waterfront, call marketing manager, Kara Lapus, and Ramon Villadiego at 2526888 loc. 6002; or e-mail

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Anna Bayle: On success and the 'X-Factor'

The first Filipina supermodel flies in from her home base in New York to impart modeling and life lessons to the remaining participants of the 'Be Bench Model Search'

WHAT IS THE "X-FACTOR"?

In the hit reality TV show "Be Bench Model Search," the term comes up almost every week.

The first TV reality search of its kind, "Be Bench Model" aims to find the next big endorser for the label Bench.

Supermodel Anna Bayle has flown in from New York to mentor the remaining participants in the search and conduct a special summer on modeling.

She will show the finalists what it takes to be a supermodel on Sept. 8, 10:30 p.m., over at ABS-CBN.

Bayle still has the "X-Factor" to finish.

"If you do want to be a star, you will have the aura of a star. I succeeded because I wanted it more—because I had desire," she says.

Bayle first shot to fame in the 1990s as one of the world's top models, after only nine years in the business.

"I always liken the so-called X-Factor to that circle around that person—what you may call aura—that says 'look at me.' Some people are genetically blessed, but without desire, more beauty, more size quality, the looks will amount to nothing. X-Factor is all about desire," says Bayle.

In her prime, Bayle stood out in a sea of blondes, brunettes and redheads, not to mention the blue-green- and hazel-eyed.

"It was both a liability and an asset," she says about looking different. "But with everything, there are always pros and cons. You just have to make the most out of the situation."

Bayle landed high-profile jobs and soon became one of the highest-paid models of her time, gracing international campaigns for major fashion brands and being photographed by top lensmen, including the late Helmut Newton.

Today, she is busy producing her show, "The Next Anna Bayle," and working for fashion stints, including her own line, annabayle.com. She will model it occasionally for select projects.

Bayle says those aspiring to become models should realize that modeling, though often perceived as glamorous, is hard work.

"It's a lot like going to school. You have to be on time, professional, and in good shape, with very good skin and hair. Caring for your body is another form of discipline all models should have."

The model should always aim to please, says Bayle. She advises all models to have grace, smile, "often misdirected in shows, easily translates to great pictures."

"A model's movements on the runway or a photo shoot must be fluid," she points out. "Static movements, like walking elegantly on a catwalk, capture the eye of the audience. It's also easier for the photographers to direct a model with fluidity because they can anticipate your next move."

"The concept in the same to a photo shoot. Jerky movements are a gamble because the shot may or may not turn out to be great," she continues. "A photo shoot is an exercise in control. A model who has graceful movements in front of the camera, making graceful lines with her body, makes it so much easier for the photographer to capture a great picture."

Getting the perfect shot, perfecting angles, and becoming a real model takes time and a lot of practice.

Winners of the "Be Bench Be Model Search" Grand Finals will each receive cash prizes, modeling contracts with Bench, management contracts with ABS-CBN, and two-year-lease house-and-lot units in St. Monique Woods courtesy of Globe Asiatique Realty Holdings Corp.

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LOGMAN WATCHES CATER TO UP-market fashion-conscious consumers in search of new, exclusive products and recent gender designer accessories. Logman stands well away from traditions yet boasts top-quality handmade finishing.

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The company was the first to place diamonds on aluminum, igniting the diamond-embellished sports watch trend. Logman Collections are favored by famous celebrities such as Sir Elton John, Oprah Winfrey, Catherine Zeta-Jones, Madonna, Michael Jordan, Brad Pitt, Elizabeth Taylor, Sharon Stone, Barbara Walters, Janet Jackson and Paris Hilton, to name a few.

Logman watches are also worn by sports icons such as David Beckham and Formula 1 head coach Jean Capelli. During the 2002 Rio-Russia Summit held in Rome, Logman watches were chosen by Italy's Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi as gifts for the delegates. United States President George W. Bush and British Prime Minister Tony Blair received custom Aluminum Epic watches.

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Season of eye-catchers

CEBU LOMOTAN ARTI BAMBA And emerged winners of Style Eye Catchers Model Search Grand Finals Season 1 held at Gaisano 3 Park recently.

Ten males and 10 females competed in swimwear, casual and formal wear in front of a special panel of judges that included fashion divas Jun Escalona by Gaisano, Style Magazine editor Anna Tenzi, MTV Pinoy host Model of the World winner Raphael Rayos, D'Level Paris' chief makeup artist Jiga Alayaga, runway.ph/Subculcia I.C. Mendoza, actress Alessandra de Rossi, Century Tuna Superbook 2007 winner Jhary Ortega and The Agenzie president Laura Sanchez.

The search was sponsored by Style Magazine, United Colors of Benetton, Safety Gas, The Agenzie, The Casting Library, Accenture G800 Blue, D'Level Professional, Eskipot 24/7, Make Up Wet Bar, Charlotte Ayala Malls, Bob Akinkunas Photography, Monster Radio RX 93.1, and Hit 98.5 FM.

For details on how to join Season 2, visit Style's website, www.stylemagfashion.multiply.com.

JO-AN Dorotheo

ENTERTAINMENT

Editor Bonnie G. Velarde

INSIDE
- Sex, boat shoes and open bars in Venice Only in Hollywood/G4
- Kuh's home a museum of sorts Home Body/H1

Iya, *very* Filipina

By Harinet B. Cruz

DESPITE HAVING GROWN up in Australia, actress-TV host Iya Villania cannot shake the "very Filipino-fashioned" values of respect to elders.

At 21, Iya says she is not keen either on living on or on being the latest ingénue teen with TV host Drew Arellano, 27, her boyfriend of three years.

"I'm too young. I still have a lot to learn and so much to do," Iya told business-management student Jamie Yuzon last week. "I may have lived in Australia but it was in Bendemeer, a conservative community where lots of Filipinos live."

Iya's dad and two sisters are based in Australia, but some chose to join her here.

Dean's lister

Apart from her show biz commitments, Iya is busy studying Psychology at De La Salle University, where she's been on the dean's list for the last two terms.

"I'm fascinated with the power of the human mind. It intrigues me," Iya says.

She's keenly interested to subjects like abnormal and social psychology. "I was assisted to discover all these various mental illnesses. I even took time to research on the condition called dissociative identity disorder (DID)."

Iya is one of the hosted MEO GIRL stars, aside from being JOEY Illusa Chaneco's sexiest VJ, she is also co-host of the Sunday noontime show "SUGP" and the celebrity dance program "I Can Dance" with Derek Ramsay. Iya shares hosting chores with Chrisse Encinas and Angel Aquino in Studio 23's magazine lifestyle show "Uy Girls."

This month, Iya will be seen in "Mari Kanda's Landmines," as Yelissa, lead actor Phong Wenson's lady love.

SHEDDING CLOTHES, ETC.

ALYSSANDRA de Rossi is shedding some of her personal possessions, including clothes, via an online celebrity auction to her charity starting Sept. 10. "I've given my personal items will help other people," the TV-film actress says. The items include a watch, accessories, shoes and autographed screen-worn stuff. All the items will be posted on the website www.auction.ph from Sept. 10-19.

45 years
Metrobank
First Metro Travel offers full range travel services

The past couple of years have been challenging for the Philippines travel industry. For the past five years, the number of inbound visitors has languished around the 2 million mark - far fewer than some of its competitors in Southeast Asia. In 2005, for example Malaysia and Thailand welcomed 16 million travelers.

Despite the dip in tourist numbers, one travel agency, First Metro Travel has been consistently developing products and services to cater to the growing needs of the traveling public. Among its travel services being consistently offered to its customers are the Corporate Travel Management that handles the full travel requirements of corporate accounts, Foreign & Domestic Leisure Travel that provide individual/ group tour packages, and Travel Documentation that provide assistance and various types of travel documentation requirements. First Metro Travel put up branches in Ortigas Center, Los Baños, Legazpi and Cebu City to make the availment of its services more accessible.

Sixty percent of First Metro Travel is owned by Metrobank, the country's largest bank in terms of resources.

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Late last year, First Metro Securities launched its online trading system, highlighting its award-winning interface with Metrobank Direct online banking.

The company envisioned the system to be an additional service for the few million savvy clients interested in managing their own investments and trading online.

Almost a year into the launch, the company reports overwhelming demand, with new enrollments streaming in and email volumes skyrocketing by the day.

Why are investors going online and flocking to www.firstmetsec.com.ph?

First of all, the stock market is hot. Interest usage is expanding. And online Trading is empowering.

It provides clients with the same, if not more stock information, than a broker on the Trading Room Floor are displayed practically as quickly as on the trading floor screens.

The typical First Metro Securities client is between 35-37 years old, male, internet literate, and with the skills, interest and aptitude to potentially take charge of his own stock market investments.

The most active client is 72 years old and female. The youngest so far is 20. Clients are found as far away as Canada and Riyadh. They come from Bahrain, Hong Kong, Singapore, Leyte and Pagadian.

The allure of First Metro Securities is understood. The company is a member of the Metrobank Group and makes a special effort to put group resources to good use for the benefit of its clients. It has been profitable every year since inception in 1994.

First Metro Securities launched a clean and simple-to-use interface, which enables clients to view price information real time quickly.

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SPIN

Acel's debut album tests digital downloading market

MAGIC MUSIC, A SUBSIDIARY OF ABS-CBN's Star Records, is hoping its newly signed talent, singer-songwriter Acel Librando of Mossimar MC as "the country's first-ever digital artist."

When it comes to that Acel's debut album, "Silver Lining," is available only through digital downloads.

Apparently, it's a marketing strategy that encourages buying songs through the Internet and which will be attractive to consumers with a limited budget, because fans can buy an album for only 40 pesos, or 4 per song basis.

It's also a move to discourage piracy, although Acel's management admits there's really no foolproof way of stopping the technological scourge.

As the moment, only two songs from the album's 12 tracks are available. "We're still testing the market," says a representative from Acel's management.

To download "Still Loving," the lead single, get an E-pin (electronic pin) or buy Acel's specialized prepaid card from any Load-central outlet or Metrobank branch. Log on to www.starrecords.com.ph and use the log-in name and password provided on the e-pin/card.

'Soundskool'

Several groups discovered via Search Soundskool, a nationwide college band competition, have signed recording deals with EMI Philippines.

Hilera, first grand prize winner of "Soundskool" maiden edition, is currently promoting "1958" from its self-titled album that contains 12 tracks.

The band plays a right set in its gigs and sounds heavily influenced by the likes of Green Day and other American bands that were responsible for reviving mainstream interest in punk rock.

Hilera is composed of the Padilla brothers Chris (guitarist/vocals), Bobby (drums) and Ivan Gerda (bass).

Effleburbs, the 2006 "Soundskool" champion, is working on its debut album. Fronted by a female vocalist/guitarist who has adopted the moniker Alex, the band acknowledges Sonic Kinetic, Incubus and Dream Theater as influences. The rest of the band are JC Lozano, pianist, Marvin Ignatius and Abe Dizon.

"Soundskool" has raised the stakes this year with the grand prize at P250,000 in cash, P150,000 worth of musical instruments and equipment for the winning band's school, and a recording contract with EMI Philippines.

The contest is open to all assigned bands with three to five members aged 16 to 28 and currently enrolled in a college or university. They must be Filipino citizens or have resided in the country for at least a year. For details on contest mechanics, log on to www.search.com.ph.

Make way for Zelle

A new Pinoy band called Zelle has released its debut album, "Search for Warmth" (Sony BMG).

Its name is taken from lead vocalist Jean-Ell Grano who formed the group. The other members are Jasper Grasse (drums), Anthony Ramirez (bass), Kaat Tiu (bass) and Archie Salvador (guitar).

The music of Zelle is described as alternative pop-rock; the album, which took a year to finish, contains 11 original tracks and is said to be full of passion and melancholy.

"Tadhana," the current cut, is about romantic fate.

'KaminAPO Muna Uli'

The 2006 APO tribute album "KaminAPO Muna" (Universal Records), which has reportedly sold 125,000 copies, has a sequel titled "KaminAPO Muna Uli" featuring 20 artists interpreting more APO classics like "American Junk" (Kamikazee vs. Parokya ni Edgar); "Salambakin" (Mercy Famildes of Orange and Lemons featuring The Spaceflower Show); "Awit ng Barkada" (Sponge Cola); "Princess" (Sidhyeverini); "Tayo Nang Dumalaam" (Silent Sanctuary); "Mahirap Magpaalam" (Imago ng Isa" (Gilberi); "Wala Nang Hihimagin Pa" (Trip Fabric); "Isa a Smile Away" (Shamrock); "Mere Mi a Batik" (Imago); "Love is Ice Singing" (The Sheetbelts); "Sumok sa Buwan" (Lavenderd Fogs); "Tulog ang Ilog ng Mundo" (Dots Lozano); "Sentang Pa-Class" (Bandwagon Saga Project featuring Radioactive Macaspac), among others.

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LA LOVE STORY
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FISHING OF JAPAN
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PLANET TERROR
LA LOVE STORY
DISTURBIA
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RUSH HOUR 3

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BORDER TOWN
DISTURBIA
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NANCY DREW
1408
DAY WATCH
SKYWALKERS
EVAN ALMIGHTY
MY KUYA'S WEDDING
INVASION
RUSH HOUR 3
LAST LEGION
1408
DISTURBIA
SKYWALKERS
NANCY DREW
MY KUYA'S WEDDING
LA LOVE STORY

LIBIS
EDSA
MY KUYA'S WEDDING
LA LOVE STORY
FISHING OF JAPAN

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CRAZY 7
1408
LA LOVE STORY
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HIRESPASS
INVASION
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INVASION
LA LOVE STORY
PLANET TERROR

BLADES OF GLORY
BOURNE ULTIMATUM
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Conceptis Sudoku

	7	3				5	4	
			3	6	2			
	6			3			8	
	3		6		4		2	
	5			9			1	
			4	1	9			
	1	8				6	5	

Difficulty Level ★★★★

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.

Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Sex, boat shoes and open bars

VENICE, ITALY—"WHY THE heck?"

George Clooney jokingly chided Tilda Swinton when he noticed Friday's hot smack at the Excelsior Hotel for a late breakfast chat and saw Tilda co-star, extravagant on barefoot, wearing what she called her "boat shoes."

George stooped down playfully to exaggerate Tilda's towering height.

Tilda's note for her platform shoes was apt for the place mentioned for the casual entre-actes. The two actors play adversaries in "Michael Clayton," their legal thriller entry in the ongoing film festivalfrenzy.

George, Tilda and Tom Wilkinson are compelling in this film. We told George—who plays a top-notch New York lawyer who "fixes" his messiest clients' problems—that, as an actor, he probably knew his moments in scenes like where he goes nuts a notch with Tilda and Tom. "No, they for the three moments with me," he countered in typical acting modesty as he pointed more tea in his cup. "No, I definitely live for those moments."

Michael Clayton," which shows how the scrap multinational corporation will go to deal with a legal crisis, manages to be both entertaining and socially relevant.

Then we went down Excelsior's famous private dock, where the men found luxurious water taxis to get to their official pub screenings. We boarded one, en route to

ONLY IN HOLLYWOOD

Robert S. Napoles

sabre leather and wood panel, to go to the Hotel Cipriani, which is another Sirotic landmark. Upon arrival, we sipped Bellinis and admired the much-photographed Venetian water landscape while waiting for the arrival of the director and stars of the fest's opening night film, "Atonement."

When the group arrived, we sat down for lunch and a chat, first with the great actress Vanessa Redgrave and director Joe Wright—and then, after watching rehe's Keira Knightley and James McAvoy in "Atonement," an adaptation of Ian McEwan's novel, Brits and James play lovers whose fate is impacted by a false accusation made by a young girl, Briony Tallis. The latter is portrayed with remarkable skill by Saoirse Ronan (who was 12 at the time of the filming), and first by Romola Garai and Vanessa in the character ages.

Spiritual quality

"Atonem, beautiful, cultural and a wonderful example of how actresses should age gracefully, was gracious in disposition as well. She was genuinely curious about how her cast-buy Romola and Saoirse, who each portray Briony, had been portrayed from there? Vanessa was all ears when Joe explained that, yes, he was honest first and then modified for the actors who will play the character in her later years. He explained that in shooting Romola and Vanessa, he went more for their spiritual or inner quality Hathaway to Saoirse.

Next, in a dark green dress with a matching knitted jacket, schoolgirl Ronan she relished the fun role. Cecilia Axelrod wanted her to play Briony instead.

We think Saoirse should get some weight, though. She is challenging to look as downright skinny as Nicole Kidman.

James' character sends the wrong note (a vulgar one) to Saoirse's Cecilia in the film set in the 1930s and 40s. The actor, who has garnering roles since his break-out performances in "The Chronicles of Narnia," told us that in this cyberspace age, his late act committed the mistake-making reminder many have already made—sending an incriminating e-mail to the wrong person.

Shedding inhibitions

We lingered on Cipriani's dock and admired the powered-pastry lapses since before we boarded another water taxi that took us back to Lido and to Hotel Des Bains, which was memorably filmed in Luchino Visconti's "Death in Venice." In one of the stately rooms, we met director Joe Wright and his "Last Orders" and "Pride & Prejudice" star Keira Knightley, who was immediately greeted with a round of "congratulations" from the journalists for his portrayal of an intelligence chief in World War II-era Shanghai.

With a scarf jauntily wrapped around her neck, the acclaimed Hong Kong actor revealed what made him shed inhibition and all his clothes in the movie's explicit sex scenes. "When you are in character, you are not shy," Tony Wai Tony's partner in these graphic encounters, said that losing only Ang said the consummate actor was also helped.

When we asked co-stars and co-workers Jessica Schramm who came up with all those sensual positions that Tony and Tang does in scenes, he answered with a sly grin, "They were all from Ang's imagination."

Ang does not make the scenes unbelievable," James said of his friend and creative collaborator. "He does not think that actors are

"MICHAEL Clayton" co-stars George Clooney and Tilda Swinton in Venice. AP

effective when they are comfortable."

Intellectual exudation

When we told James he is slowly and fascinating it was to follow the proceedings of the film's official press on the previous day because of the intellectual English exudation, he laughed and agreed. James joked that Ang gave a long and eloquent answer to a journalist's question in one press and per the translator could offer by one of translation was, "He so busy."

In the evening, we toured the layout spun and returned to Cipriani, a night to behold as we hobnobbed by boat. Candles cast a soft, golden glow in a dark dress hall that was booked by the director party following the official screening of "Michael Clayton."

At our table, Paul Haggis, who directed the classic Best Picture winner, "Crash," said that he was writing the script of the new James Bond movie. He is to be born for his competition entry "In the Land of Blah."

Will Smarty, one of the guests which included Michael Stars, directors Spike Lee and Mallory Bond, was asked to give a toast. Flashing his "Lost in Translation" smile and looking at the night's honoree, George Clooney (with his latest model date beside him), Bill gamely stood up and said, "I have no business speaking here tonight, but every time I come to Venice, I have always gotten into trouble with George. I like to thank the people of Venice for keeping the cutest out of me room. The best is over! Harvey Weinstein is paying!"

Reveal the celebrated at rwsmith.TSR@yahoo.com and read his blog, "The Hapless Raconteur," at www.rogerwsmithhappens.net/hapless/net.

AT THE CINEMAS

GLORIETTA 1	1 CHOPSUEY	2 DISTURBIA	3 NANCY DREW	4 A LOVE STORY
GLORIETTA 4	1 DAYWATCH	2 SHANGHAI KISS	3? DISTURBIA	
	4 ARE WE GONE YET?	5 THE INVASION	6 NANCY DREW	7 1408
GREENBELT 1	1 DAYWATCH	2 NANCY DREW		
GREENBELT 2	1? NANCY DREW	2? DISTURBIA		
	3 SHOOTOUT	4 EVAN ALMIGHTY	5 DAYWATCH	
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	3 DAYWATCH	4 THE INVASION	5 SHOOTOUT	
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TRINOMA	1 EVAN ALMIGHTY	2 SHOOTOUT	3 DAYWATCH	4 NANCY DREW
	5 CHOPSUEY	6 1408	7? DISTURBIA	

AT THE MALLS

Ayala Malls

Glorietta — Philippine Human Rights Information Center Exhibit, September 7 to 8, 2007 at the Activity Center

Greenbelt — Jazz Nights, September 10, 2007 at Gil's Le Fresco

Alabang Town Center — Women's Exhibit, September 1 to 30, 2007 at the Activity Center

Ayala Center Cebu — Silver Years of American Idol Live!, September 20, 9 PM, Strikeys (Cinema 7)

Market! Market! — Lantern Mall Show, September 6 & 9, 2007 at the Activity Center

Christopher's — Repertory Philippines presents Stacey's GINGERBILLA Kids at SM's Music Theater - Opens August 11, 2007. For inquiries, pls. call 687-1710

Ayala Museum — Exhibition: Homage to Juy Kaminsky, August 30 to September 30, 2007. For more info, pls. call 757-7117 loc. 31 or email museum_inquiries@ayalamuseum.org

Tsi Nonna — Samsung Exhibit, An exhibit of the latest Samsung mobile phones, September 14 to 16, 10am to 9 pm, Starbucks / Food Choices Level 2

Singer's home is a veritable museum of art and antiques

HOME BODY

By Bayani San Diego Jr.
Photos by Rodel Rutor

The home of singer Kuh Ledesma in Pasay City is a museum of sorts.

Daughter Isabella, who dabbles in painting, describes the house as a haven for artists.

Pieces by Isabella—and other painters—are strewn all over the place.

Former music billboard painter Mong Buhain and son Skye have painted murals in the home.

"They make replicas of [19th-century Filipino folk artist] Damian Domingo's paintings of mute scenes, as well as portraits of Filipinos in Arte's scarf," Kuh relates.

Since Ming Moog and Yeo are no longer busy doing movie billboards, Kuh has taken them in. "They drop by when they don't have work," she says. "My try to find something for them to do. Sometimes I call my friends and ask if they'd like some good paintings."

"This is an artists' community," Isabella adds. "Carpenters, painters, furniture makers and gardeners get to do their work here."

Kuh describes the interiors as, "Fusion, but Filipino at heart."

She has gathered antique pieces from all over the country, plus a few from neighboring Asian countries. (There's a Zen touch to from Bali.)

Antique pieces from the Visayas adorn

RECOUNTING: Kuh Ledesma has found a haven for artists.

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PIONEER

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2 DISTURBIA
3 SKINWALKERS
4 DAY WATCH

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2 CASA
3 THREE
4 THE INVASION

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2 A LOVE STORY
3 RUSH HOUR 3
4 RISE

DASMARIÑAS

1 SINKING of JAPAN
2 THE INVASION
3 THREE
4 1408

IMUS

1 1408
2 MY KUYA'S WEDDING
3 THREE
4 A LOVE STORY

ANGELES

1 SINKING of JAPAN
2 RISE
3 CASA
4 THREE

TARLAC

1 A LOVE STORY
2 LICENSE to WED
3 EVAN ALMIGHTY

STARMILLS

1 1408
2 MY KUYA'S WEDDING
3 A LOVE STORY

4 RISE
5 SINKING of JAPAN
6 RUSH HOUR 3

BACOLOD

1 BLIND DATING
2 DON'T LOOK BACK
3 BORDERTOWN
4 A LOVE STORY
5 CASA
6 THREE

ILOILO

1 THE INVASION
2 A LOVE STORY
3 CASA
4 HAIRSPRAY
5 MY KUYA'S WEDDING
6 DON'T LOOK BACK

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1 DISTURBIA
2 CHOPSUEY
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A PLOY in the foyer.

GOLDEN ornaments, a friend's gift.

HOME BODY

ISABELLA sits snug her baby grand from the US.

ANIMAL door knocker from Bali.

REVOLUTIONARY message is painted on "100-year-old pelvic bone of some animal," says Rob.

KUH TURNED this fragment into a shrine to adorn his living room.

Fusion, in the key of Kuh

different corners of the house—he insists, intricately carved wooden cabinets from a church in Lobos, Bohol, and from a school in Cebu. Both his prized church finishes, we also relish and a bishop's chair (from Cebu), in quiet nooks.

The best-selling recording artist, who just released "K," a CD of modernized lowdown dirties, loves to jazz up some of his antique collection. One example is a fragment of a church altar that the turned into a mirror frame.

A needle masterpiece in the 24-meter sewn dining table, made according to his specifications, along with the mahogany kitchen table.

From Ilocos, Calbiarta, where she was based in the 1990s, Kuh has brought home many antique and art pieces, from lamps and vintage cameras. "Even a regular in the flea markets there," she says. "Now, the items from those areas are 10 times more expensive. That's why we take advantage of those pieces."

A baby grand piano was shipped to us the US, says Isabella. "Pero sa piano, it has gone through a lot. It's actually quite broke. It's not built (deeply). It has character."

Kuh reveals that she trained her eye for antique shopping through the years. "If you're interested in it, you can learn quickly and spot a good buy easily." She has picked up bits of tips from books, too, and from friends like writer-director Chris Martinez.

"I also learned a lot from an Australian boyfriend, the son of an ambassador," Kuh recalls. "His mom also taught me a lot about ceramics."

She shares a tip: "Before buying antiques, check the base, the inside, as well as the kind of ceramic used. You have to be careful because there are a lot of good but various out there."

INTRICATELY carved wooden cabinet from sidewalk in Lobos, Bohol.

CANDELABRA serves as accent piece in the hallway.

THE SINGER'S foot of Oravan sits on it and leans beam.

A BUFFET spread carries fried eat on this altar-table from Cebu.

CARVING from a century-old church.

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